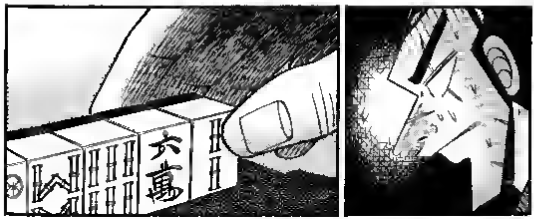
CHAPTER 120
SOMETHING UNUSUAL

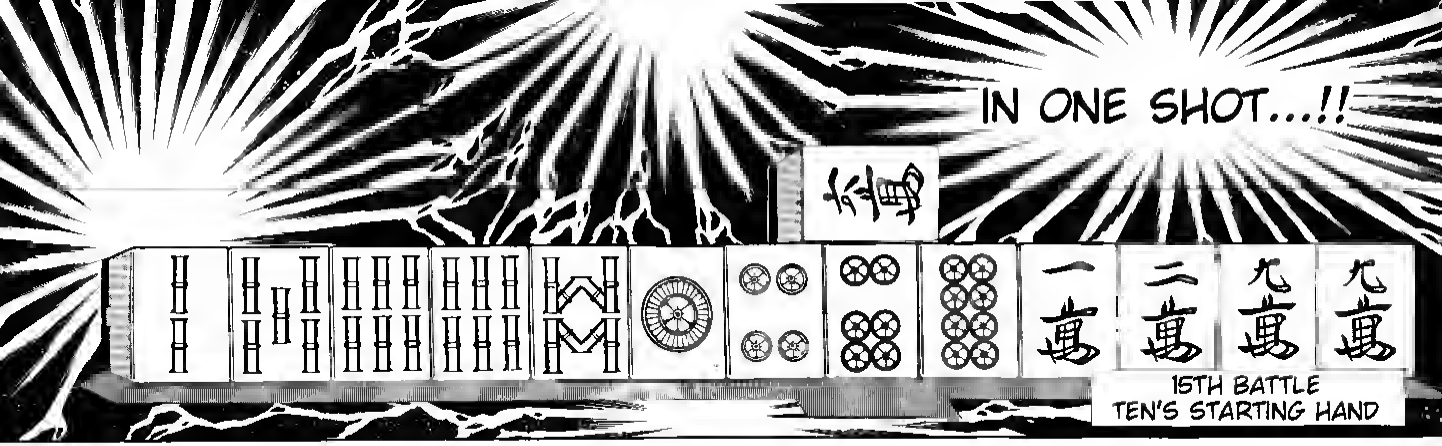
GIVEN... THE CHANCE AT A COMEBACK...!
TWO-PLAYER MAH-JONG...
TO DETERMINE WHO WOULD COME OUT ON TOP IN THE BATTLE OF EAST AND WEST
WAS COMING TO A CLOSE, TOO...!
AT LAST, THIS FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN TEN AND HARADA

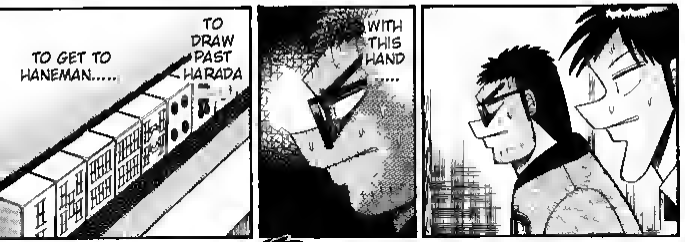
THERE WERE EIGHT... OR NINE MINUTES LEFT...!?
.....
THE MOST CRUCIAL POINT, THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER .....
BY GETTING IN A WIN
AT THE SAME TIME
IF HE WON WITH MANGAN, HE'D CATCH UP WITH HARADA ...!
IN THIS 15TH BATTLE
IN SHORT...
HE GOT THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER ...!
RICHI, TSUMO, II-PEI-KOU FOR 5200.
IN THE 14TH BATTLE, TEN HAD
カチャ... カチャ...
NARROWED TO 12000.
THE DIFFERENCE IN POINTS BETWEEN HIM AND HARADA
HIS TOTAL WAS 8000.
AND A RICHI STICK FOR 1000
ADDING 6 DEALER STICKS FOR 1800

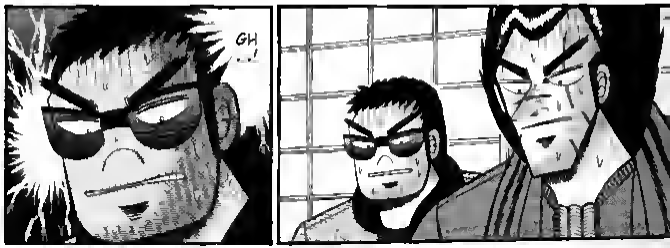
TIED WITH HARADA!



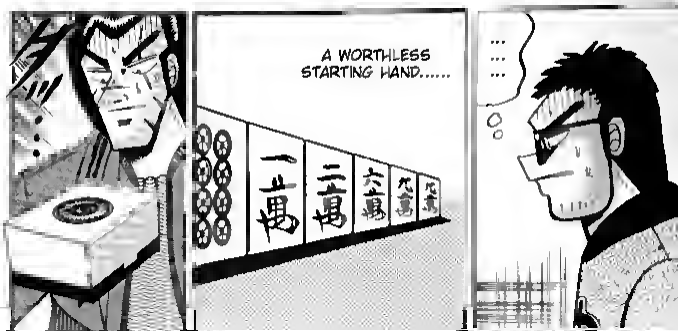
TIED .....!
THEY'LL BE TIED IN THIS 15TH BATTLE...
HE'S ALREADY CAUGHT HIM.....!
FINISH IT.....!
GO...!
MORE THAN THAT...!
MAYBE .....


IN ONE SHOT...!!
15TH BATTLE
TEN'S STARTING HAND


TO GET TO HANEMAN.....
TO DRAW PAST HARADA
WITH THIS HAND .....


GH ...!

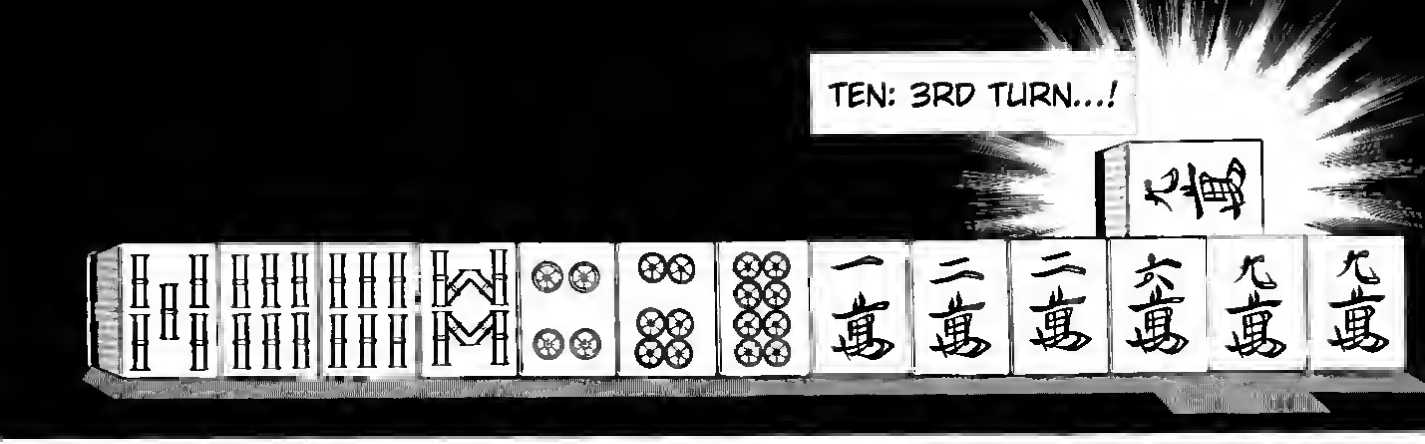
ADD A 4-5-6 SAN-SHOKU TO THAT.. ...
TAN-YAO PIN-FU TSUMO 1 DORA...
WITH THE DORA, 4-SOU...

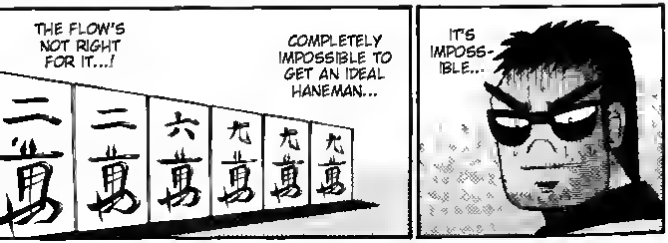

A WORTHLESS STARTING HAND.....
... ...

A HAND LIKE THIS...!
ヒ゜!!...
A HAND LIKE THAT.....
AND WITHOUT BEING BLESSED BY GOOD DRAWS ...
HE'S STRUGGLING .....!
WILL BE OBVIOUS ....
A WAIT IN THE 4-5-6 AREA
EVEN IF IT GETS TO TENPAI... ..

HARADA WILL PREDICT IT...!
.....MAYBE.....

ONE-SHOT COME-BACK...
IN THE END... IT'S TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR..

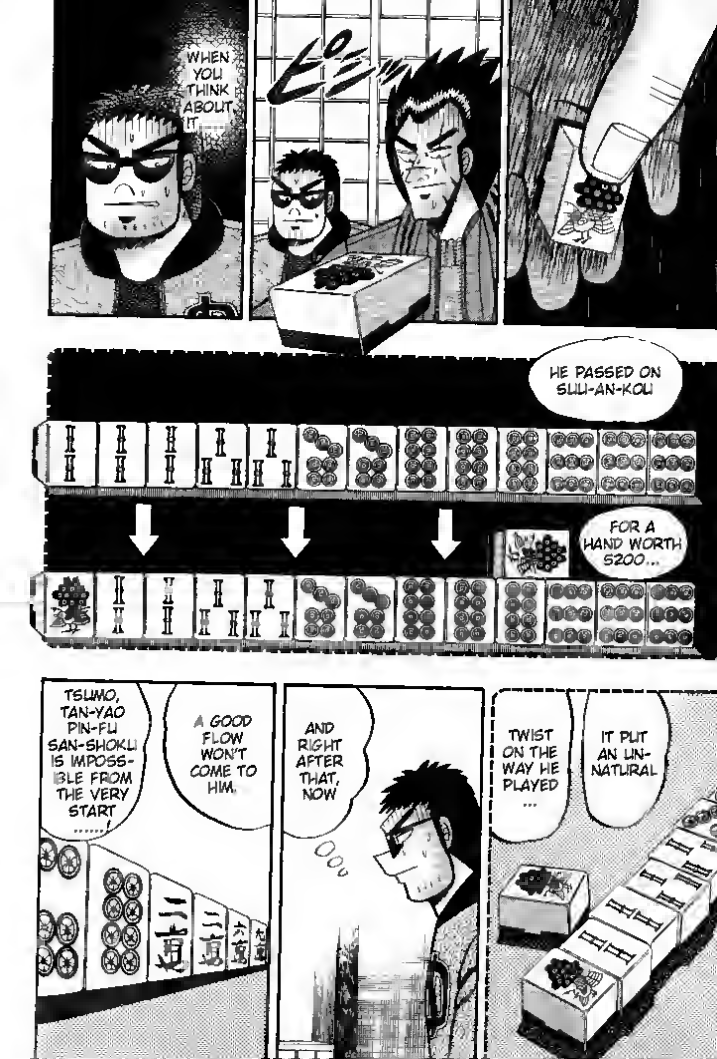

TEN: 3RD TURN...!


THE FLOW'S NOT RIGHT FOR IT...!
COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET AN IDEAL HANEMAN...
IT'S IMPOSS-IBLE...

.....BEFORE THAT.....! THE QUESTION IS, CAN HE EVEN WIN..!
NO...
EVEN MANGAN WILL BE TOUGH...
NEVER MIND HANEMAN

OF ALL THE THINGS TO DRAW, THE 9-MAN...!
GH...!

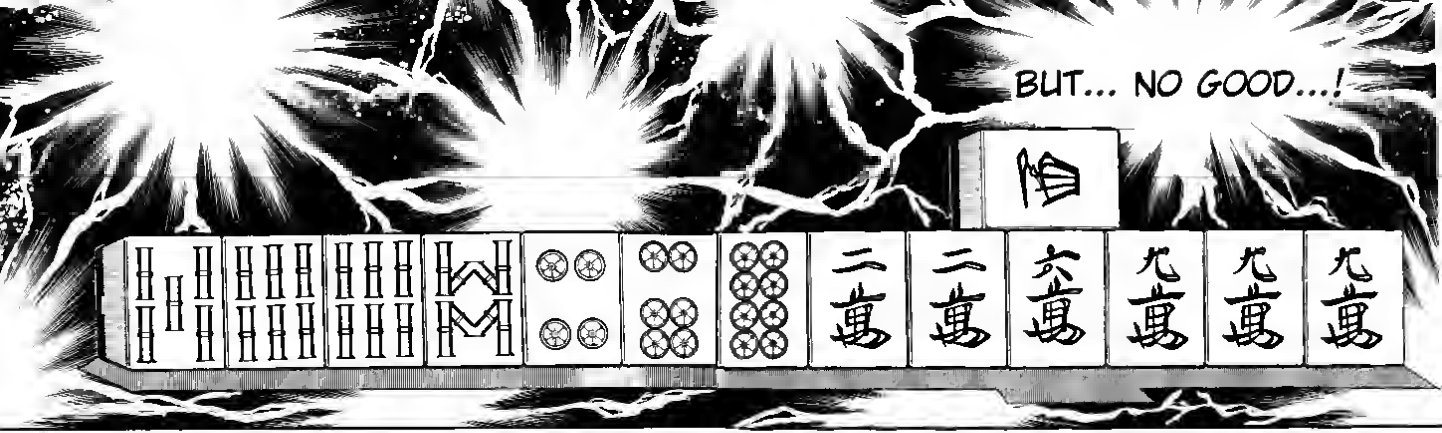
HE'S LOSING PIN-FU AND TAN-YAO... BY DRAWING 9-MAN.

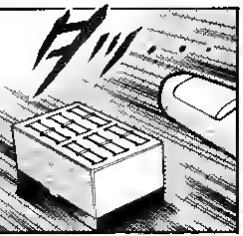

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.....
HE PASSED ON SUU-AN-KOU
FOR A HAND WORTH 5200...
TSUMO, TAN-YAO PIN-FU SAN-SHOKU IS IMPOSSIBLE FROM THE VERY START!
A GOOD FLOW WON'T COME TO HIM.
AND RIGHT AFTER THAT, NOW
TWIST ON THE WAY HE PLAYED...
IT PUT AN UNNATURAL

MIGHT BE A ROUND TO ENDURE...
THIS 15TH BATTLE
AND KEEP THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER...
TO DECLARE TENPAI BEFORE HARADA
AND AT LEAST GO FOR ANY HAND
ENDURE .....
MORE THAN THAT IS TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR
WITH THESE DRAWS ...
THAT MIGHT BE GOOD ENOUGH.

HARADA'S DISCARDS
HE GOT RID OF A CLOSED WAIT WITH THAT 6-MAN AND 8-MAN
...
...
...
WE CAN'T LAG BEHIND.
HARADA SEEMS QUICK.....
BUT.. HAVING SAID THAT...

THESE DRAWS...
TEN'S DISCARDS
WHEN IT'S URGENT, LIKE NOW
HIS HAND IS UNMOVING
STRUG-GLING...!
IT'S BEEN WORTHLESS DRAWS FOR THREE TURNS
SINCE DRAWING THE 9-MAN ON THE 3RD TURN
UNMOVING FROM RYAN-SHAN-TEN .....!
DRAW IT...!
7TH TURN ...!


BUT... NO GOOD...!



HUH ...?

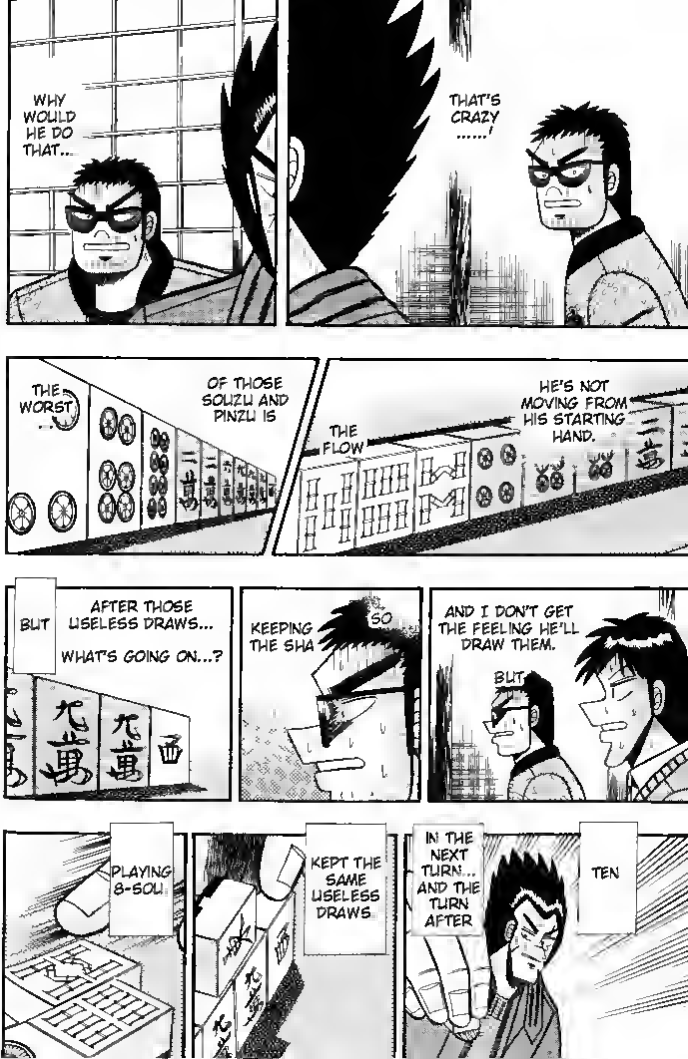
THE WORST...
NOT A HAND WORTH PLAYING OUT.....!

A USELESS DRAW AGAIN .....!

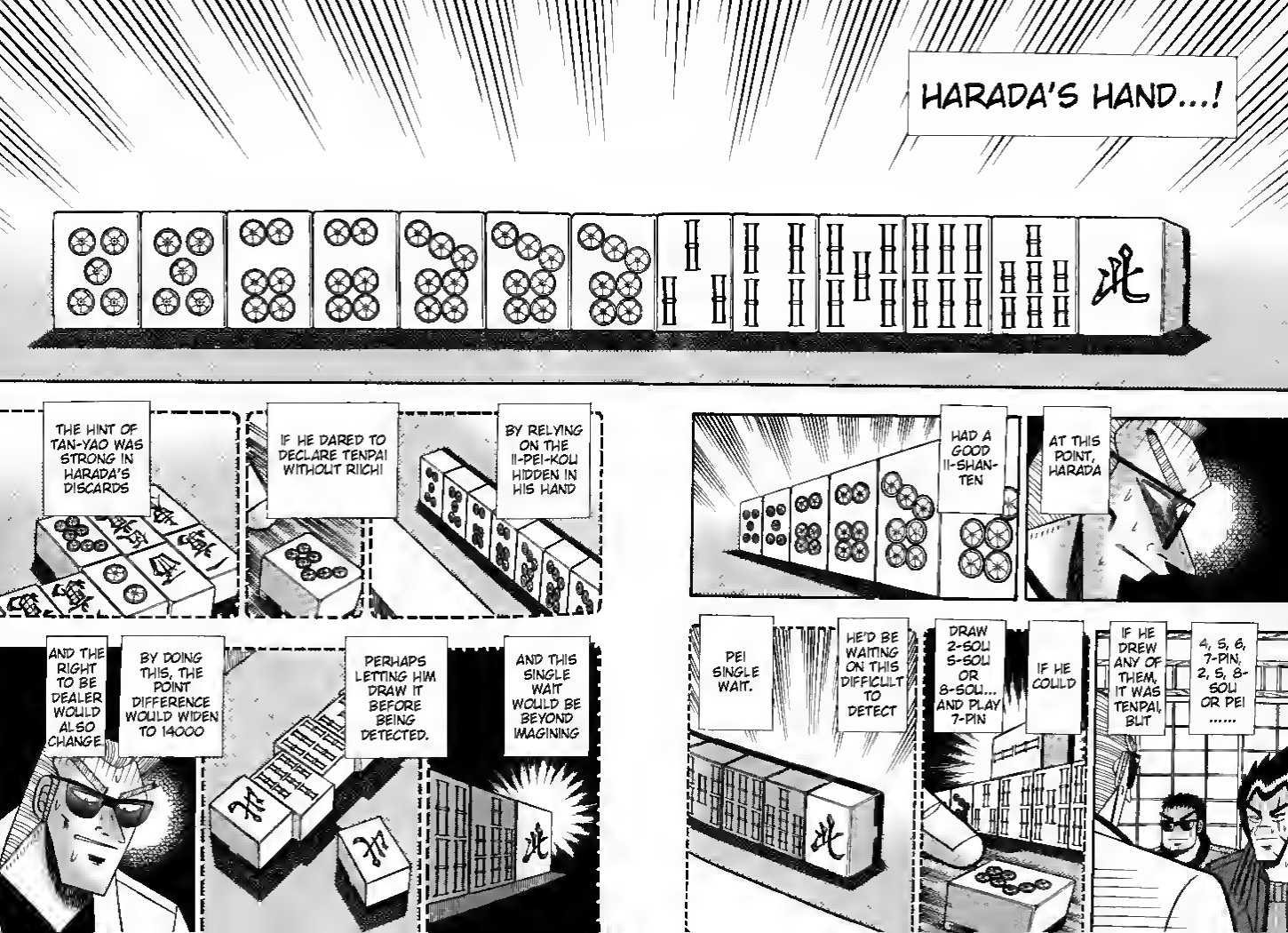
DISCARDING 6-SOU...!?

AND DISCARDING 6-SOU.....!?
KEEPING SHA.....

ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, HARADA WILL BE IN TENPAI FIRST...!

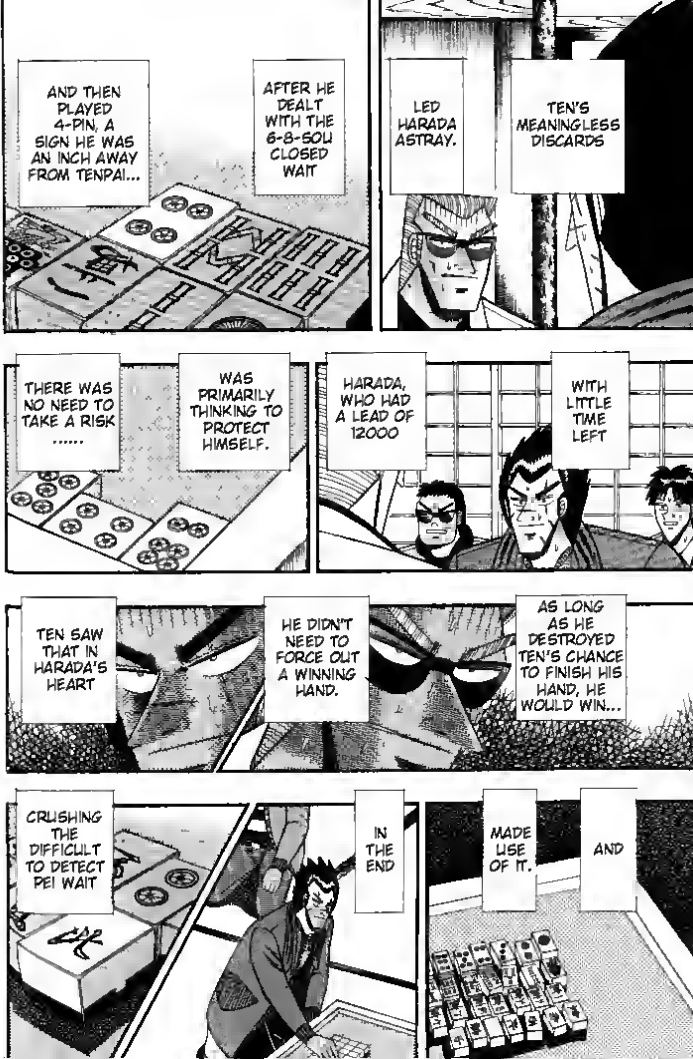

WHY WOULD HE DO THAT...
THAT'S CRAZY .....!
THE WORST...
OF THOSE SOUZU AND PINZU IS
THE FLOW
HE'S NOT MOVING FROM HIS STARTING HAND.
BUT
AFTER THOSE USELESS DRAWS... WHAT'S GOING ON...?
KEEPING THE SHA
SO
AND I DON'T GET THE FEELING HE'LL DRAW THEM.
BUT
PLAYING 8-SOU.
KEPT THE SAME USELESS DRAWS.
IN THE NEXT TURN... AND THE TURN AFTER
TEN

IT FIRST GLANCE, IT WAS A MEANINGLESS MOVE, BUT .....
THE MEANING WAS UNCLEAR.
.....
PLAYED THE GAME WHILE IGNORING HIS OWN HAND.
PLAYED 4-PIN ...
HUH ...!?
THIS 4-PIN CAUSED SOMETHING UNUSUAL TO HAPPEN.
BUT .....
HARADA'S MOVEMENTS STOPPED...!


HARADA'S HAND...!
THE HINT OF TAN-YAO WAS STRONG IN HARADA'S DISCARDS
IF HE DARED TO DECLARE TENPAI WITHOUT RIICHI
BY RELYING ON THE II-PEI-KOU HIDDEN IN HIS HAND
HAD A GOOD II-SHAN-TEN
AT THIS POINT, HARADA
AND THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER WOULD ALSO CHANGE
BY DOING THIS, THE POINT DIFFERENCE WOULD WIDEN TO 14000
PERHAPS LETTING HIM DRAW IT BEFORE BEING DETECTED.
AND THIS SINGLE WAIT WOULD BE BEYOND IMAGINING
PEI SINGLE WAIT.
HE'D BE WAITING ON THIS DIFFICULT TO DETECT
DRAW 2-SOU 5-SOU OR 8-SOU... AND PLAY 7-PIN
IF HE COULD
IF HE DREW ANY OF THEM, IT WAS TENPAI, BUT
4, 5, 6, 7-PIN, 2, 5, 8-SOU OR PEI .....

WOULD BE HARD ON TEN.....!
IN THE TEN MINUTES LEFT, THAT...
HAD HIS EYES ON
BUT ...
THAT WAS WHAT HARADA
HAD A CERTAIN DECISIVE MEANING BEHIND IT...
THAT PEI SINGLE WAIT ..
HARADA CALLED ...!
CHII .....!

TENPAI .....!
AND DECLA-RED ...!
AND PLAYED PEI ...!
A CALL
ざわ..
ざわ
ざわ
FOR AN OPEN TAN-YAO WAITING ON 2-5-8-SOU.
GIVING UP HIS PEI SINGLE WAIT
YES...


AND THEN PLAYED 4-PIN, A SIGN HE WAS AN INCH AWAY FROM TENPAI...
AFTER HE DEALT WITH THE 6-8-SOU CLOSED WAIT
LED HARADA ASTRAY.
TEN'S MEANINGLESS DISCARDS
THERE WAS NO NEED TO TAKE A RISK .....
WAS PRIMARILY THINKING TO PROTECT HIMSELF.
HARADA, WHO HAD A LEAD OF 12000
WITH LITTLE TIME LEFT
TEN SAW THAT IN HARADA'S HEART
HE DIDN'T NEED TO FORCE OUT A WINNING HAND.
AS LONG AS HE DESTROYED TEN'S CHANCE TO FINISH HIS HAND, HE WOULD WIN...
CRUSHING THE DIFFICULT TO DETECT PEI WAIT
IN THE END
MADE USE OF IT.
AND

AND MAKING HIM CHANGE TO AN EASY TO DETECT
2-5-8-SOU WAIT ……!
AND THEN
URGH…!
NEATLY AVOIDED ANY PROB-LEMS ……!
I GET IT……!

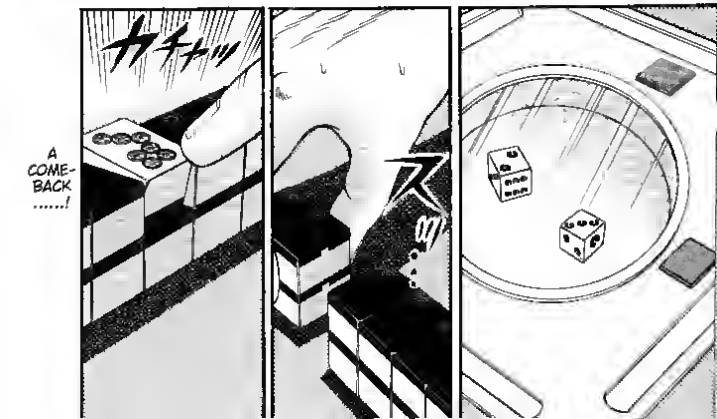
STRAIN YOURSELF DURING THE TENPAI RACE.....
YOU DON'T NEED TO
IF YOUR STARTING HAND AND DRAWS ARE POOR
..... WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT CAREFULLY .....
THE WORST POSSIBILITY
TO CRUSH...
TEN... CHANGED THE WAY HE WAS PLAYING THIS ROUND...
MAYBE AFTER DRAWING THAT 9-MAN
THE POINT DIFFERENCE WILL WIDEN AND THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER WILL TRANSFER..... THE WORST POSSIBLE SITUATION..!
WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO DETECT IT
WOULD CONSTRUCT A DIFFICULT TO DETECT TENPAI
GIVEN ENOUGH TIME, HIS OPPONENT
JUST BARELY ...!
TO GET THROUGH IT...
THAT'S WHAT TEN HAD IN HIS SIGHTS...!

CHAPTER 121
HORIZON

ざわ…ざわ…
ハラリ…
ざわ…
ガシャ!!

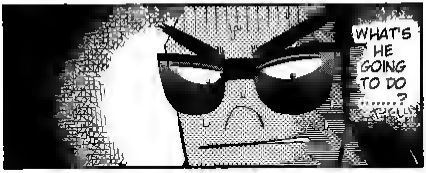
IT DIDN'T MATERIALIZE.
THOUGH HARADA DECLARED TENPAI
IN THE 15TH BATTLE
.....
IN THE END, TEN KEPT THE RIGHT TO BE DEALER IN A RENCHAN.....!
ONE DEALER STICK.
THIS ONE DEALER STICK WAS A BIG DEAL
ざわ

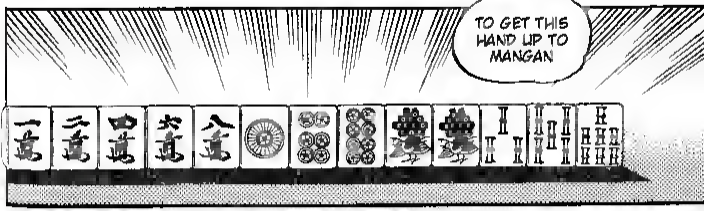
THIS TIME
BECAUSE THE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND HARADA WAS 12000
IF TEN WON FOR MANGAN, THAT WOULD BE 12300.
NOW, IN THE 16TH GAME
カチャ…
カチャ…
WITH MANGAN, TEN WOULD MAKE A COMEBACK ……!
HE'D TURN IT AROUND ……!

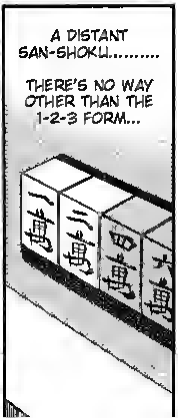

A COME-BACK ……!
カチャッ

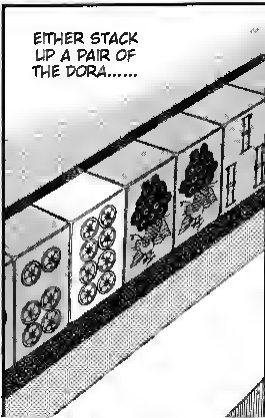
A PERFECT COMEBACK WAS ON THE HORIZON...!
IN THIS 16TH BATTLE
IT WAS NEARING THE END.
WITH ABOUT SIX MINUTES LEFT.....
AT THE MOST.....!
THE 16TH BATTLE
MIGHT BE THE LAST ONE.
THIS ONE BATTLE MIGHT BE THE ONLY ONE LEFT .....
THE 16TH .....

TEN HAD... THIS STARTING HAND...!!!
IT'S THE WORST SITUATION
...
...
...
AN EMPTY SHELL OF A STARTING HAND.....!
I CAN'T SEE ANY YAKU FOR THIS HAND OTHER THAN RIICHI AND TSUMO.....
THIS MIGHT BE THE LAST TIME AROUND... WHEN HE WANTS TO GET A MANGAN HAND NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES
THE ONE SAVING GRACE FOR THIS SHITTY HAND IS THAT IT HAS A DORA...

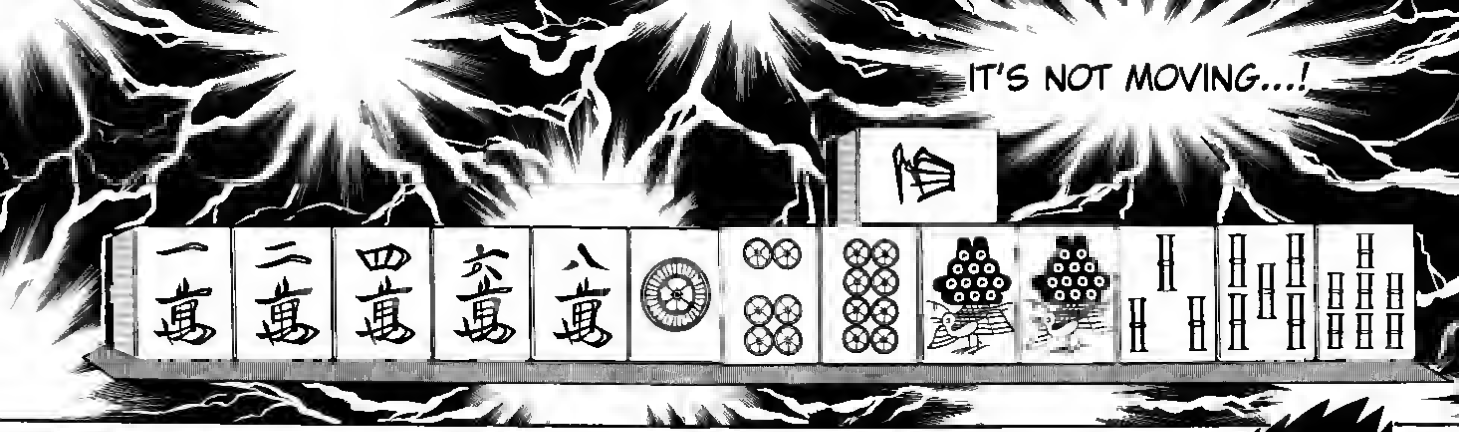

WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO.....?

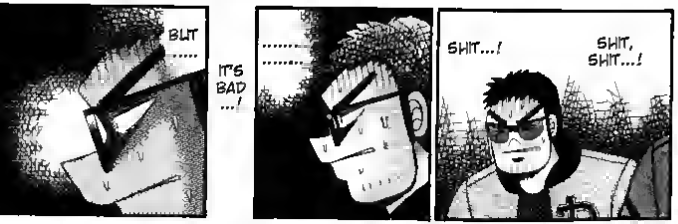

TO GET THIS HAND UP TO MANGAN


A DISTANT SAN-SHOKU.....
THERE'S NO WAY OTHER THAN THE 1-2-3 FORM...


EITHER STACK UP A PAIR OF THE DORA.....

IS LEFT UP TO FATE...!
WHICH WAY TO GO.....
ADDING TO THAT.....
THIS DRAW.....
EVEN THOUGH IT'S THE 4TH TURN...
IT'S LIKE IT'S STUCK ...!

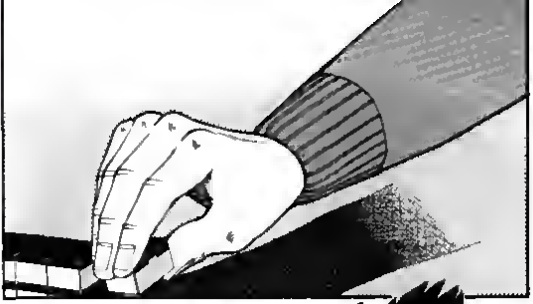

IT'S NOT MOVING...!


BUT
IT'S BAD ...!
SHIT...!
SHIT, SHIT...!

HIS HAND HADN'T MOVED FROM HIS STARTING HAND...!

HOLDING FIRM..!
JUST HOLDING FIRM .....
HE'S NOT UPSET ABOUT IT...!... NOT SHOWING A HINT OF SAYING IT'S BAD LUCK.
JUST ...
ISN'T GIVING UP...!
THIS MAN ...
EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS

THIS GARBAGE HAND ISN'T MOVING AT ALL... SHIT...!
TERRIBLE DRAWS ...!
IN THIS CRUCIAL GAME...
THERE'S TEN MINUTES LEFT.
THE LAST ROUND WAS BAD TOO, BUT...
THIS ONE IS EVEN WORSE...!



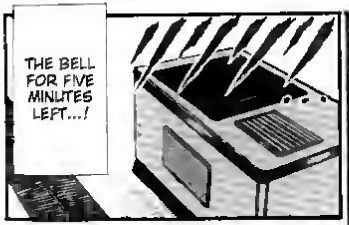
TRYING TO MAKE IT THERE .....!

AT ALL TIMES...!

HE GOT ANOTHER .....!
URGH ...!
JUST AT THAT MOMENT .....!
SO...
NOW THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF A CHANCE FOR COMEBACK .....
IT'S DRIFTING CLOSER .....!
GETTING THERE, GETTING THERE ...!
KEN THOUGHT.

SFX: BRRRRRIIIINNNGG

FIVE MINUTES LEFT.....
FIVE MINUTES .....


THE BELL FOR FIVE MINUTES LEFT...!

RIGHT ...!
THE MATCH WILL END WITH THAT ROUND.
THE NEXT TIME IT RINGS

HEH HEH ...

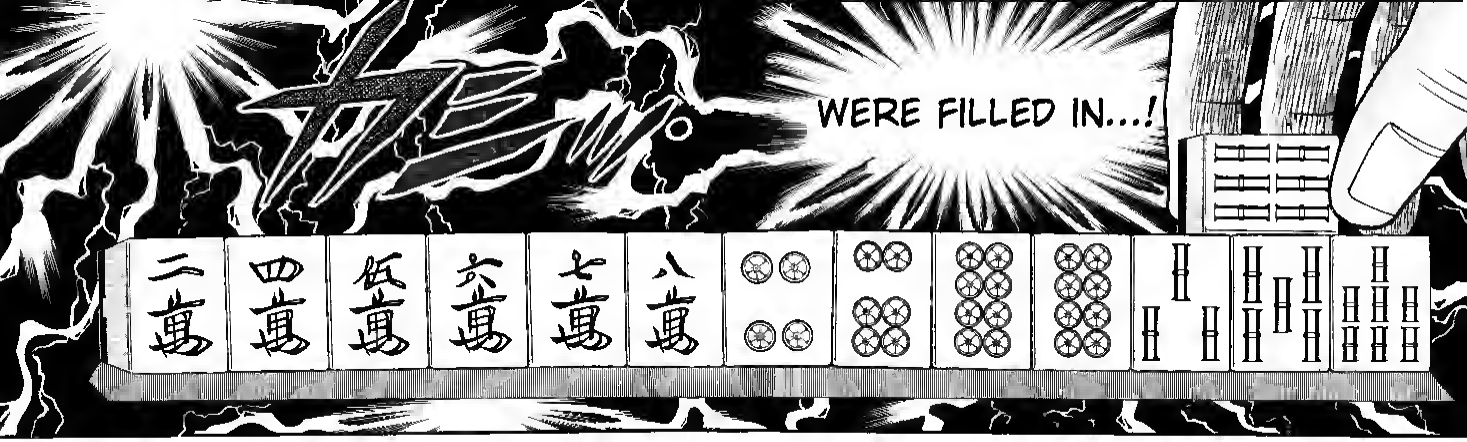
ざわ…
……
HEH HEH …
RIGHT …!
ざわ…
ざわ…
ダニッ
……

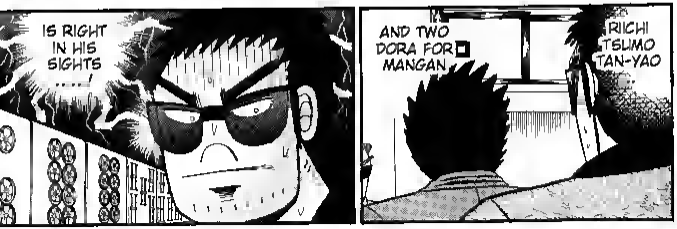
MAYBE ABOUT ONE MORE .....?
.....WHICH MEANS, THIS ROUND AND
FIVE MINUTES LEFT.....
HE WAS TO MAKE A MANGAN HAND...!
IN ONE OF THESE TWO ROUNDS.....
THIS ROUND ...
THIS IS HIS HAND BY THE 6TH TURN
EVEN THOUGH HE HAS SOME 8-PIN
BUT .....
BUT...
IS IT HOPE-LESS ...?

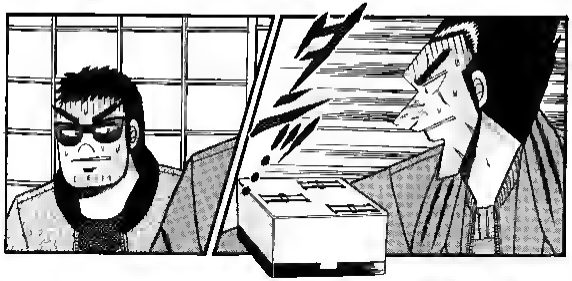
...
...
...
AFTER DRAWING 8-PIN ON THE PREVIOUS TURN
Li
八萬

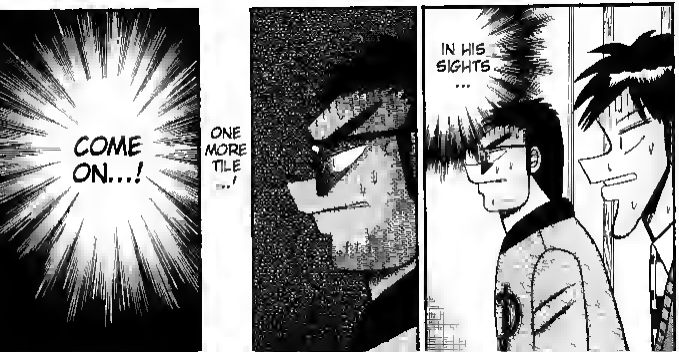
THE FLOW CHANGED ...!

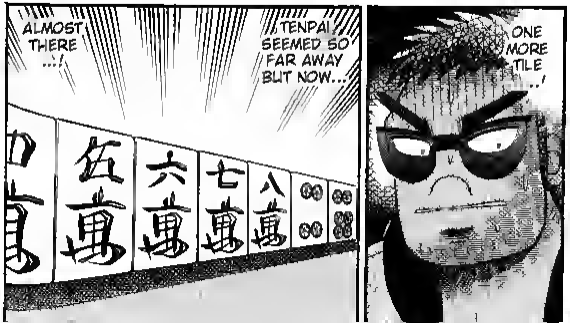
ONE AFTER THE OTHER
.....
URGH ...!
VITAL POINTS ...!
THE CLOSED WAITS THAT HE THOUGHT
WOULD BE HARD TO DRAW
.....

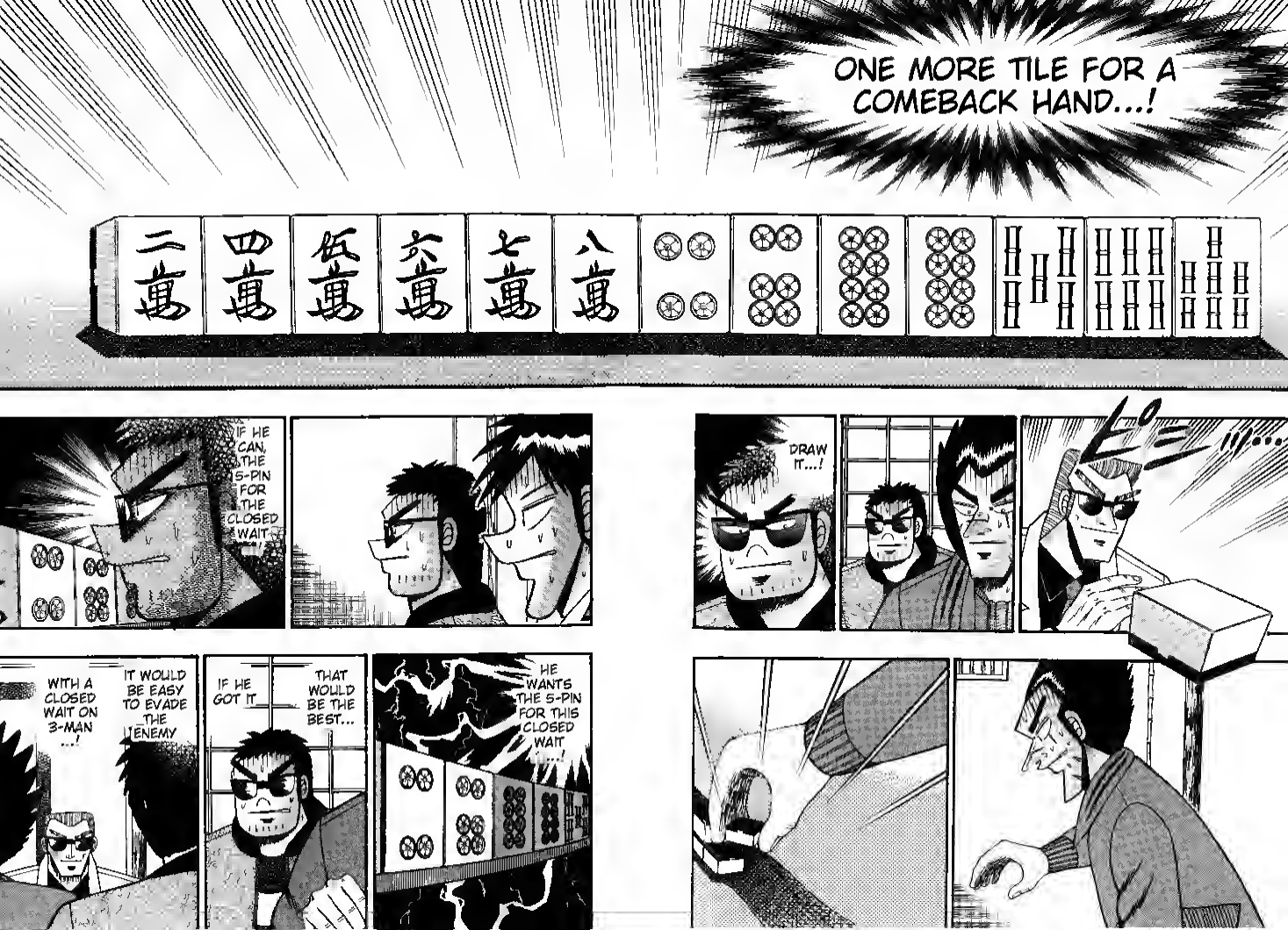

WERE FILLED IN...!


IS RIGHT IN HIS SIGHTS ...!
AND TWO DORA FOR MANGAN
RICHI TSUMO TAN-YAO


II-SHAN-TEN ...!

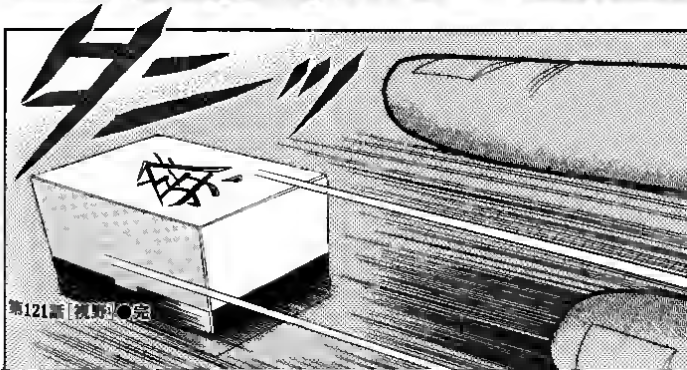

COME ON...!
ONE MORE TILE ...!
IN HIS SIGHTS ...

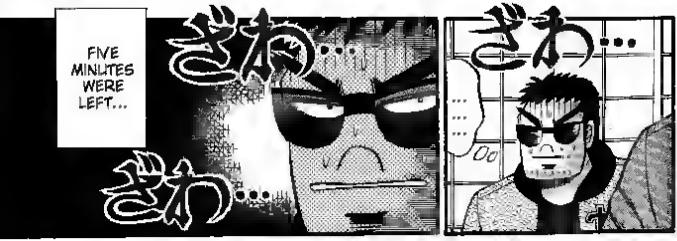

ALMOST THERE ...!
TENPAI SEEMED SO FAR AWAY BUT NOW...
ONE MORE TILE ...!


ONE MORE TILE FOR A COMEBACK HAND...!
二萬 四萬 五萬 六萬 七萬 八萬
IF HE CAN, THE 5-PIN FOR THE CLOSED WAIT...!
WITH A CLOSED WAIT ON 3-MAN...!
IT WOULD BE EASY TO EVADE THE ENEMY
IF HE GOT IT
THAT WOULD BE THE BEST...
HE WANTS THE 5-PIN FOR THIS CLOSED WAIT...!
DRAW IT...!
ヒョー!!...

THIS CLOSED WAIT ON 3-MAN IS IDEAL.....!
二萬
四萬
伍萬
六萬
七萬
八萬

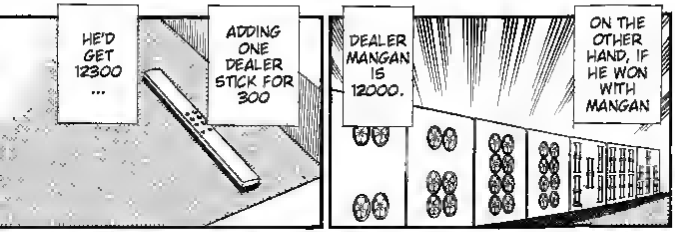
.....

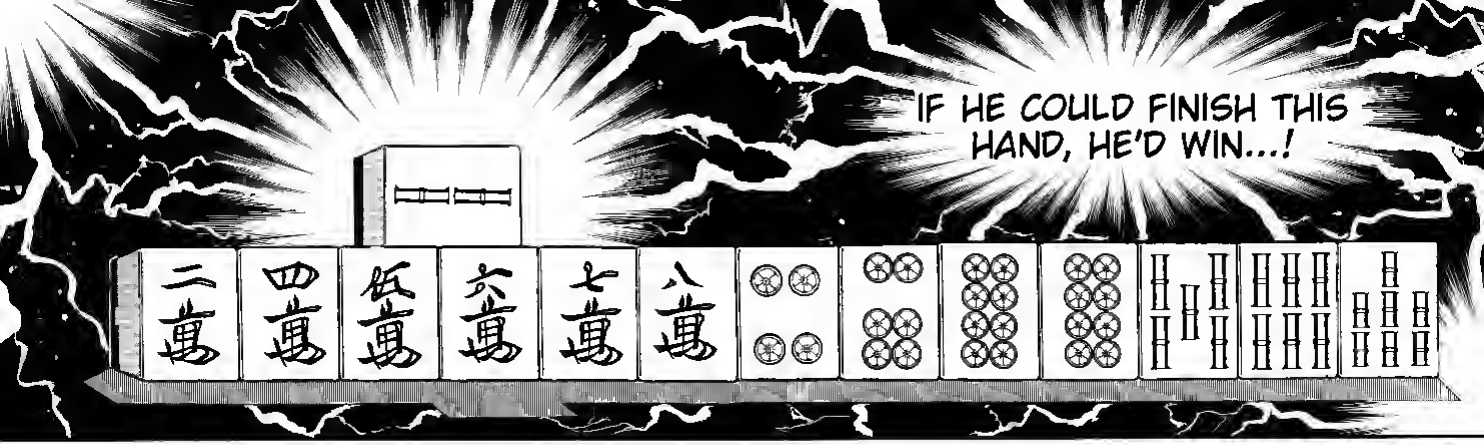

ケニッ!!
第121話 視野 ●完

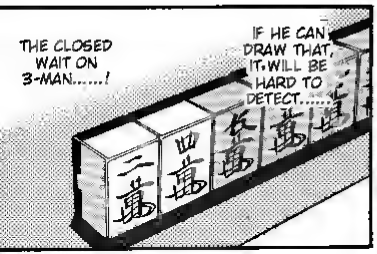

FIVE MINUTES WERE LEFT...
ざわ…
ざわ…
ざわ…
…
…
…

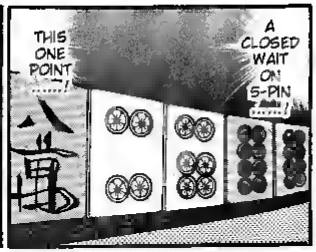
TO THE FINAL MATCH OF THE EAST-WEST BATTLE……!
THE CONCLUSION WAS IN SIGHT

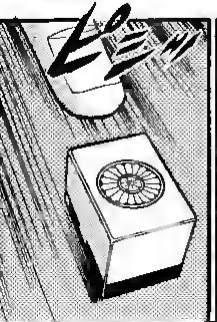
WOULD THERE BE ANOTHER TWO MATCHES ...!?



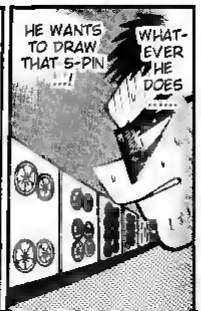

IF HE COULD FINISH THIS HAND, HE'D WIN...!


THE CLOSED WAIT ON 3-MAN.....!
IF HE CAN DRAW THAT, IT WILL BE HARD TO DETECT.....


THIS ONE POINT.....!
A CLOSED WAIT ON 5-PIN.....!


ピシッ

BUT.....

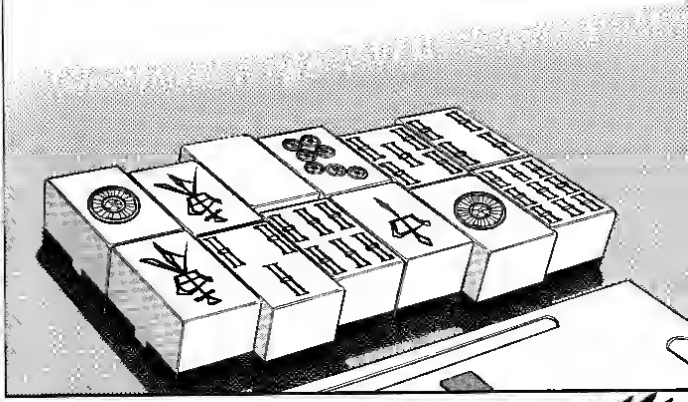

HE WANTS TO DRAW THAT 5-PIN...!
WHATEVER HE DOES.....

AND TWO OF 8-PIN, THE DORA, FOR MANGAN...!
RICHI, TAN-YAO, TSUMO

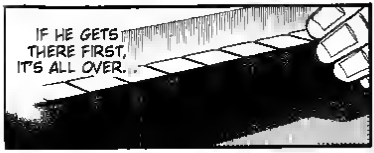
ﾀﾆｰ
HE SHOULD SETTLE IT WITH THIS HAND.....!

THAT HE'LL GET A MANGAN HAND NEXT TIME
IT'S NOT GUARANTEED

THERE MIGHT... BE ANOTHER MATCH... A 17TH MATCH COULD HAPPEN TOO, BUT..

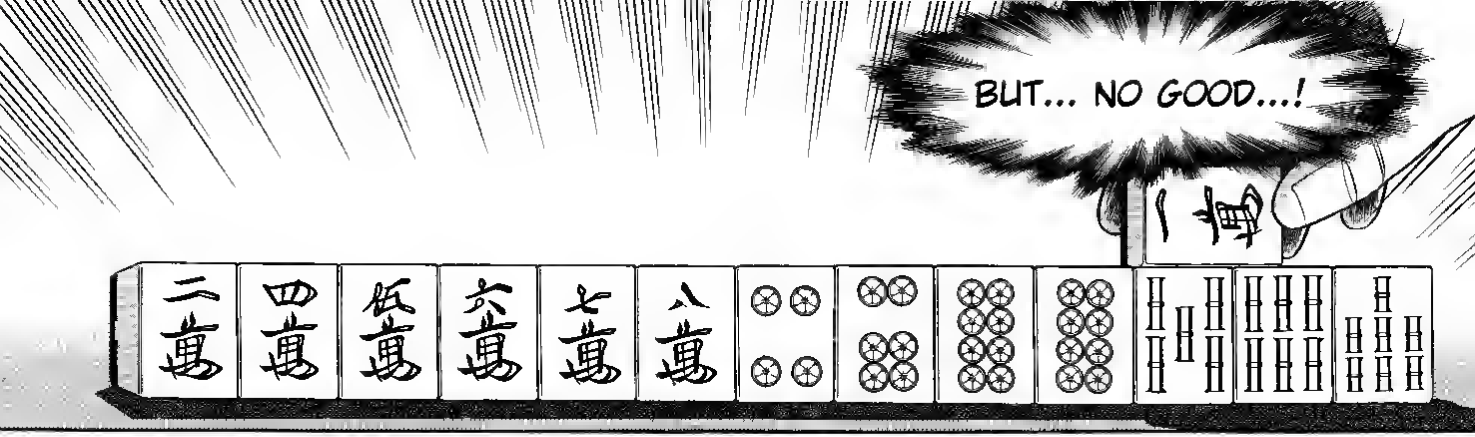


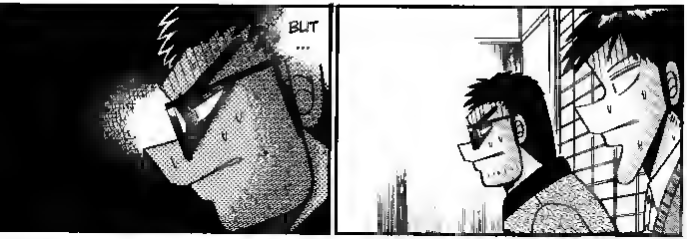
HARADA KEEPS DISCARDING WHAT HE JUST DREW, TOO...

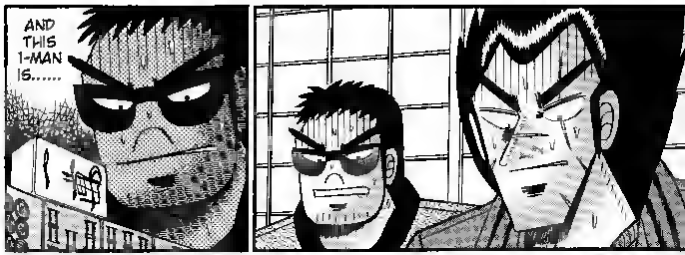

IF HE GETS THERE FIRST, IT'S ALL OVER...

IT WOULDN'T BE STRANGE TO SEE HIM DECLARE TENPAI
HE MIGHT BE IN II-SHAN-TEN ...

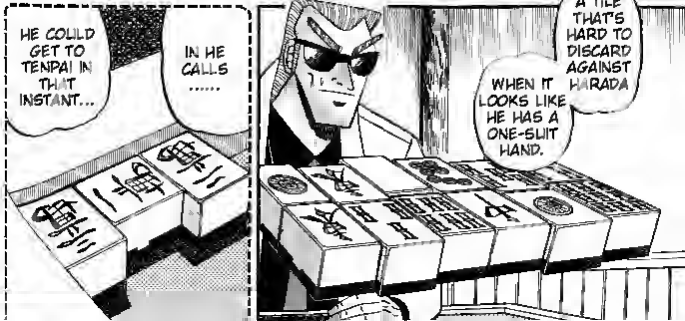
THERE'S NO TIME ...!
DRAW IT...!
5-PIN ...!


BUT... NO GOOD...!


BUT ...


AND THIS 1-MAN IS.....

HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME NOW TO WORK AROUND HIS HAND.....!
HE CAN'T LOSE GROUND.....!
WE HAVE TO GO FORWARD !

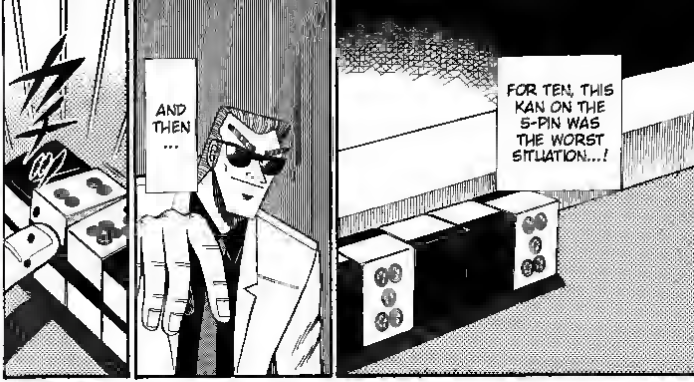

HE COULD GET TO TENPAI IN THAT INSTANT...
IN HE CALLS .....
WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE HE HAS A ONE-SUIT HAND.
A TILE THAT'S HARD TO DISCARD AGAINST HARADA

WAS WHAT KEN THOUGHT...
HE MADE IT...!

HARA-
DA
JUST
THEN
...!
ZAN...
カチャ…
カチャ…
カチャ…
LIRGH
...!
IT
WENT
IN
.....?

バラ…
KAN …!
UURGH …!

KAN ...!
THE DESPERATELY WAITING ...
WHICH MEANS ...
KAN ON 5-PIN ...!
4-5-PIN IS DEAD ...!
A HEAD WIND
KH...!

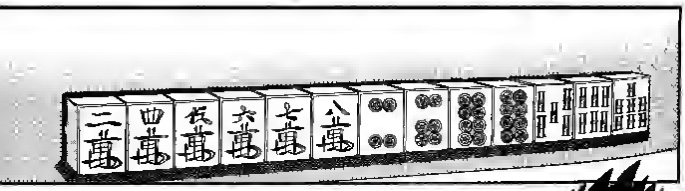

AND THEN ...
FOR TEN, THIS KAN ON THE 5-PIN WAS THE WORST SITUATION...!

THE NEW DORA WAS 5-PIN ...!

THE WORST DEVEL-OPMENT ...!
ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER
HARADA HAD FOUR DORA...!
IN SHORT

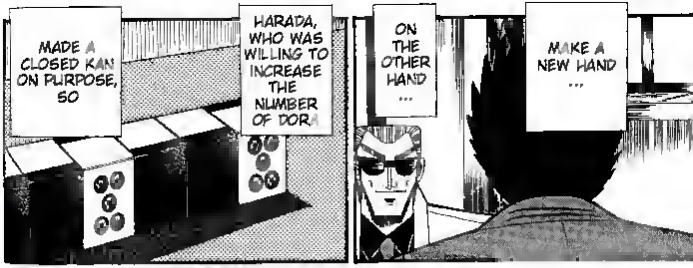
THE FLOW WAS ENTIRELY WITH HARADA ...!
THE RINSHAN DRAW .....!
BUT ...
GH...!

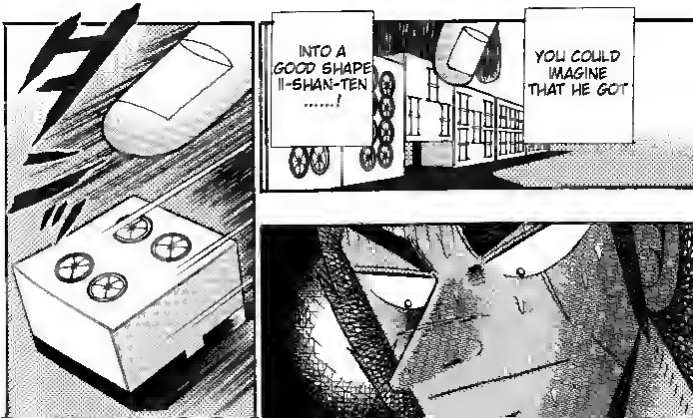
DRAWN AND DISCARDED .....!
...
...
...
WITHOUT DECLARING TENPAI...!



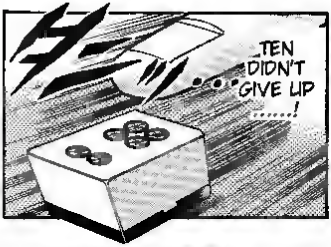
NEEDLESS TO SAY...

THIS DEAD-EYED CLOSED WAIT OF 4-PIN AND 6-PIN.
HAD TO DEAL WITH
TEN, IN THESE FINAL TURNS
WOULD BASICALLY FINISH THE GAME.
THE 16TH MATCH

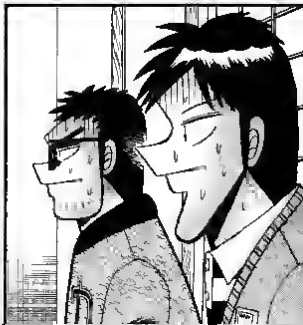

MADE A CLOSED KAN ON PURPOSE, SO
HARADA, WHO WAS WILLING TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DORA
ON THE OTHER HAND ...
MAKE A NEW HAND ...


INTO A GOOD SHAPE, II-SHAN-TEN .....!
YOU COULD IMAGINE THAT HE GOT

IT WAS GOING TO BE HARD ...!
WOULD BE DIFFI-CULT ...!
BEFORE HARADA DID
TO GET CONTROL OVER THE TENPAI RACE
BUT.....



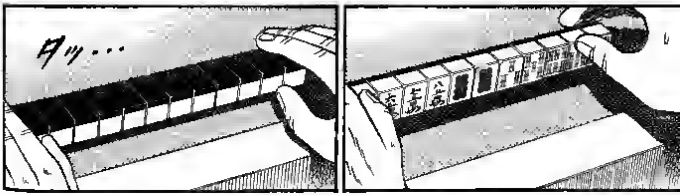
JUST ENDURED IT



DOING HIS BEST.....!
.....

THAT WAS THE DUTY OF A FIGHTER ...!

DO HIS BEST ...!
EVEN IF HE LOST ...
.....
TEN-PAI ...!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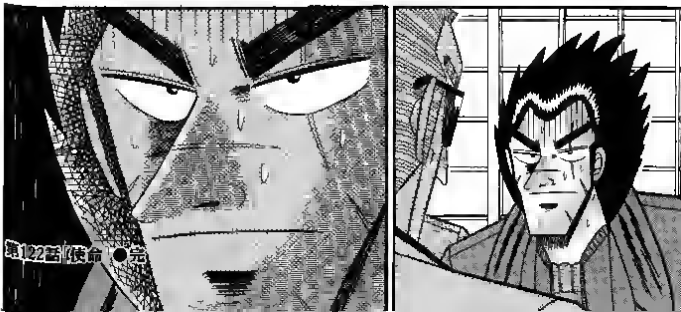
第122話「使命」●完

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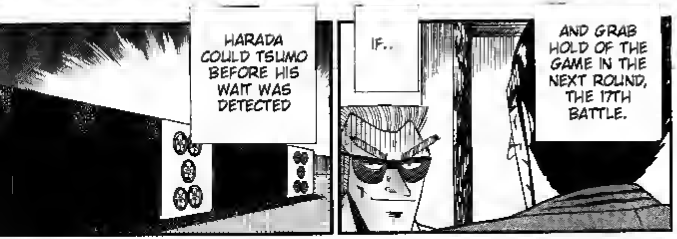
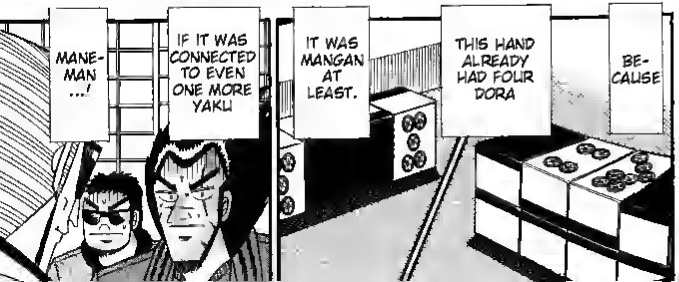
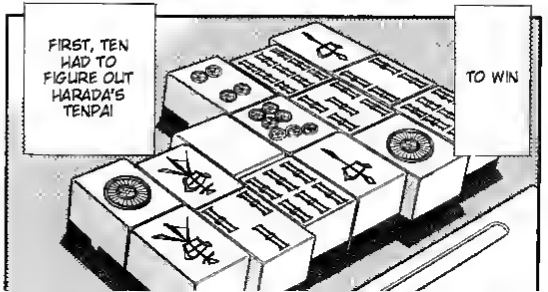
CHAPTER 123
INCIDENTAL

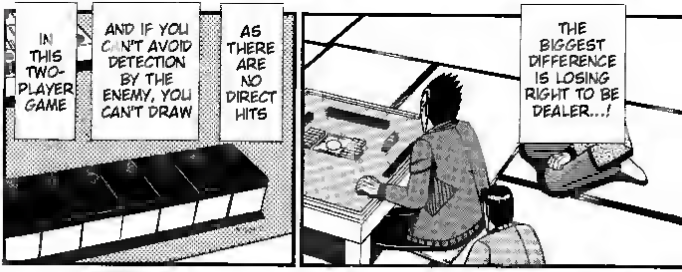
THE GRANDE FINALE ... TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG ...!

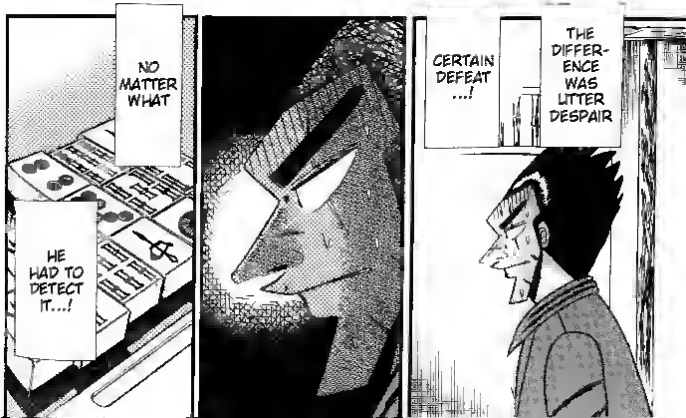






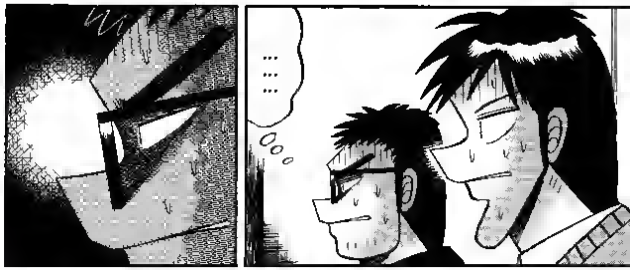
EITHER WAY
OR MORE THAN THAT .....
WOULD WIDEN TO 20300 OR 24300...
THE CURRENT POINT DIFFERENCE OF 12000

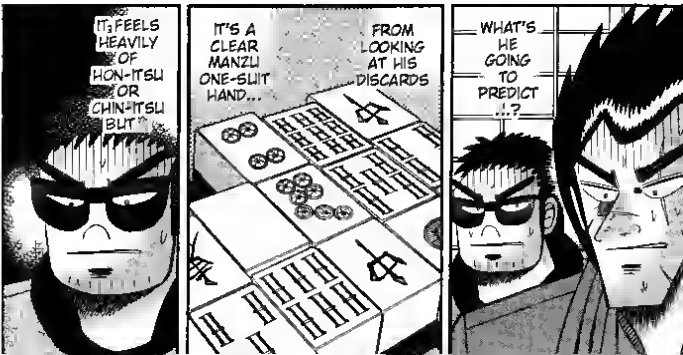

IN THIS TWO-PLAYER GAME
AND IF YOU CAN'T AVOID DETECTION BY THE ENEMY, YOU CAN'T DRAW
AS THERE ARE NO DIRECT HITS
THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE IS LOSING RIGHT TO BE DEALER...!


NO MATTER WHAT
HE HAD TO DETECT IT...!
CERTAIN DEFEAT ...!
THE DIFFER-ENCE WAS LITTER DESPAIR

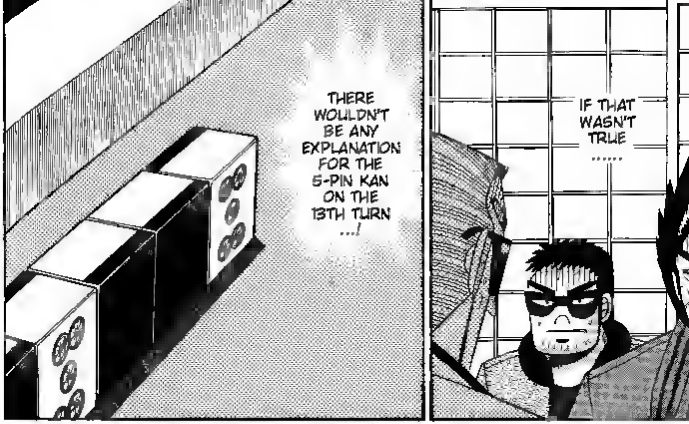
NO MATTER WHAT .....!!
IF HE WAS ALLOWED TO WIN ...
DEFEAT ...!

FORCED TO LOSE ...!


TEN ...
... ...
Ooo

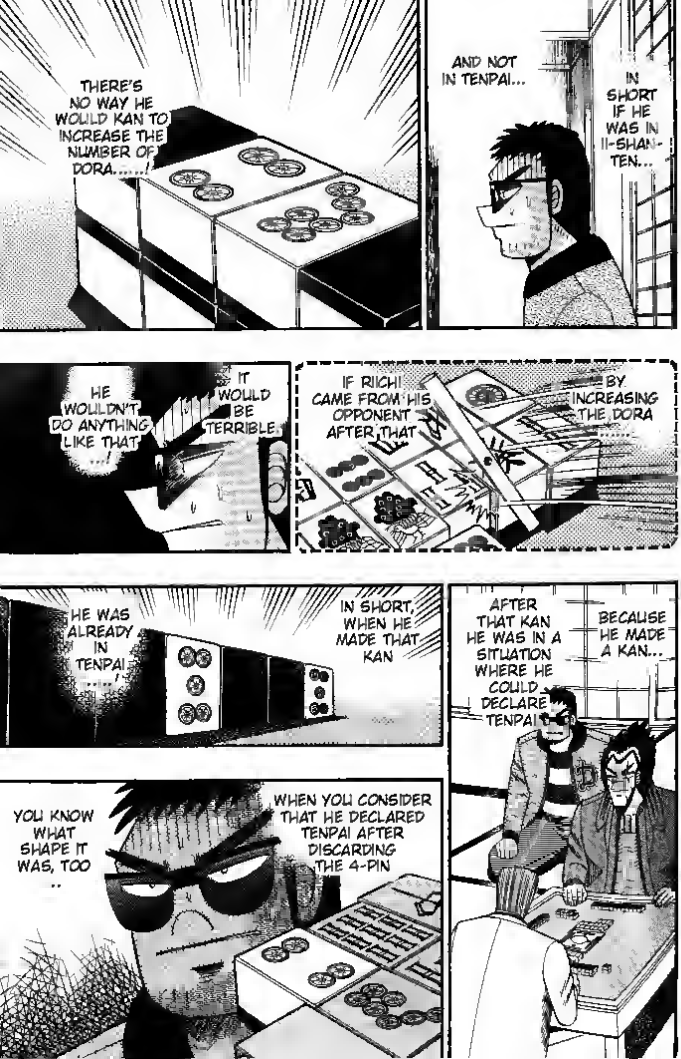

IT FEELS HEAVILY OF HON-ITSU OR CHIN-ITSU BUT...
IT'S A CLEAR MANZU ONE-SUIT HAND...
FROM LOOKING AT HIS DISCARDS
WHAT'S HE GOING TO PREDICT ..!?

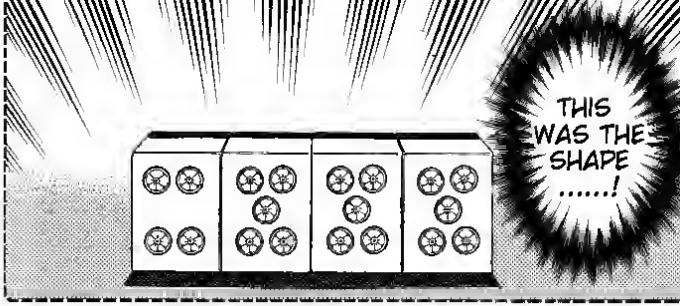
A NUMBER OF MANZU...
HOWEVER, THERE MUST BE ...
IT'S NOT THAT ...!
NOW AFTER THAT 5-PIN KAN .....
IS DIGGING OUR OWN GRAVE...!
AIMING FOR MANZU AFTER SEEING THAT ...
THAT'S PROBABLY ALL THERE IS TO THAT .....
BUT
HE "DECLARED TENPAI" BASED ON SOMETHING HE DREW WHEN HE DISCARDED 4-PIN...
PROBABLY ...
.THAT "SOMETHING" IS PROBABLY A SINGLE WAIT.?!

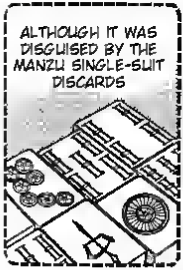

THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY EXPLANATION FOR THE 5-PIN KAN ON THE 13TH TURN ...!
IF THAT WASN'T TRUE .....

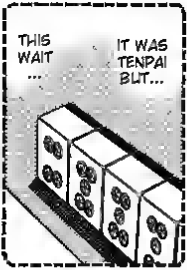
THERE WASN'T ANY NEED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DORA BY CALLING KAN...!
HE'S IN A POSITION WHERE HE CAN GET AWAY SAFELY.
HARADA HAS A LEAD OF 12000 RIGHT NOW.....

HE MUST HAVE BEEN IN TENPAI S...!
AT THE MINIMUM... WHEN HARADA MADE THAT KAN...
IF HE DARED TO DO SO, THEN
DESPITE THAT ...


THERE'S NO WAY HE WOULD KAN TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DORA.....!
AND NOT IN TENPAI...
IN SHORT IF HE WAS IN II-SHAN-TEN...
HE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT...!
IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE.
IF RICHI CAME FROM HIS OPPONENT AFTER THAT
BY INCREASING THE DORA
HE WAS ALREADY IN TENPAI.....!
IN SHORT, WHEN HE MADE THAT KAN
AFTER THAT KAN HE WAS IN A SITUATION WHERE HE COULD DECLARE TENPAI
BECAUSE HE MADE A KAN...
YOU KNOW WHAT SHAPE IT WAS, TOO..
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT HE DECLARED TENPAI AFTER DISCARDING THE 4-PIN

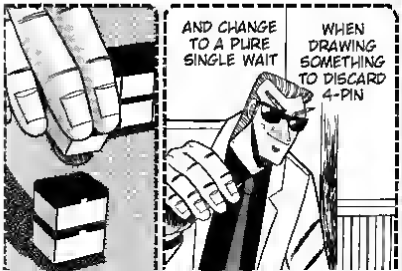

THIS WAS THE SHAPE .....!

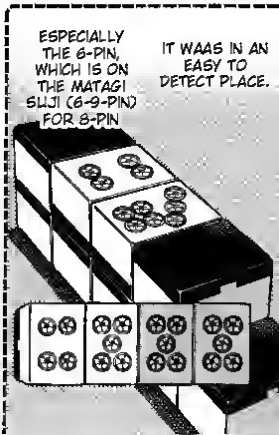

ALTHOUGH IT WAS DISGUISED BY THE MANZU SINGLE-SUIT DISCARDS

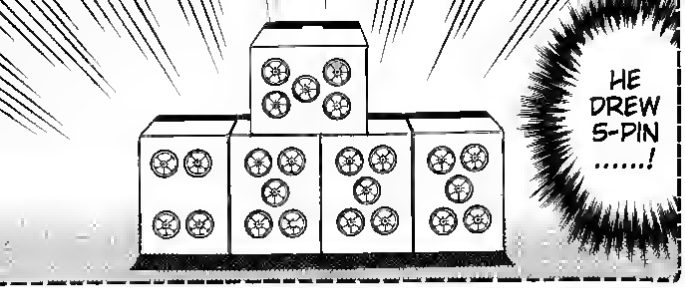

THIS WAIT ...
IT WAS TENPAI BUT...

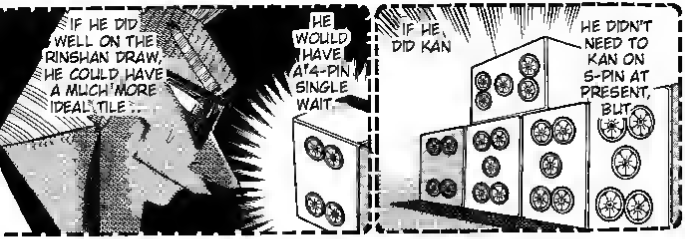
IS HOW HARADA WAS IN TENPAI AT THAT TIME
THIS 3-6-PIN OR 4-PIN WAIT

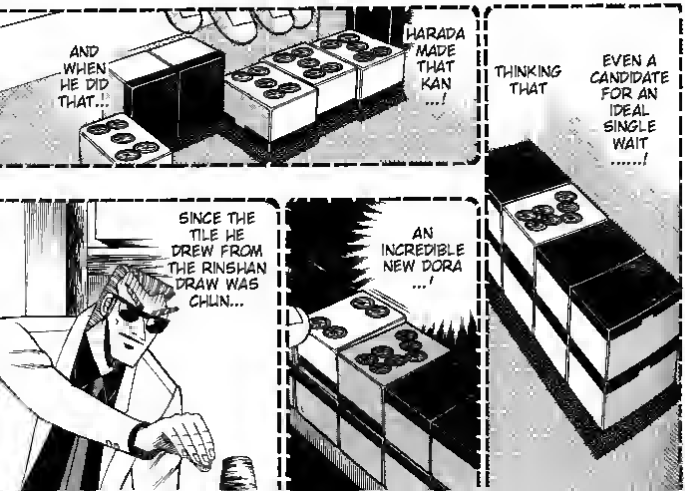
SO..
AND IS SURE TO BE THE FIRST PLACE TO PICK

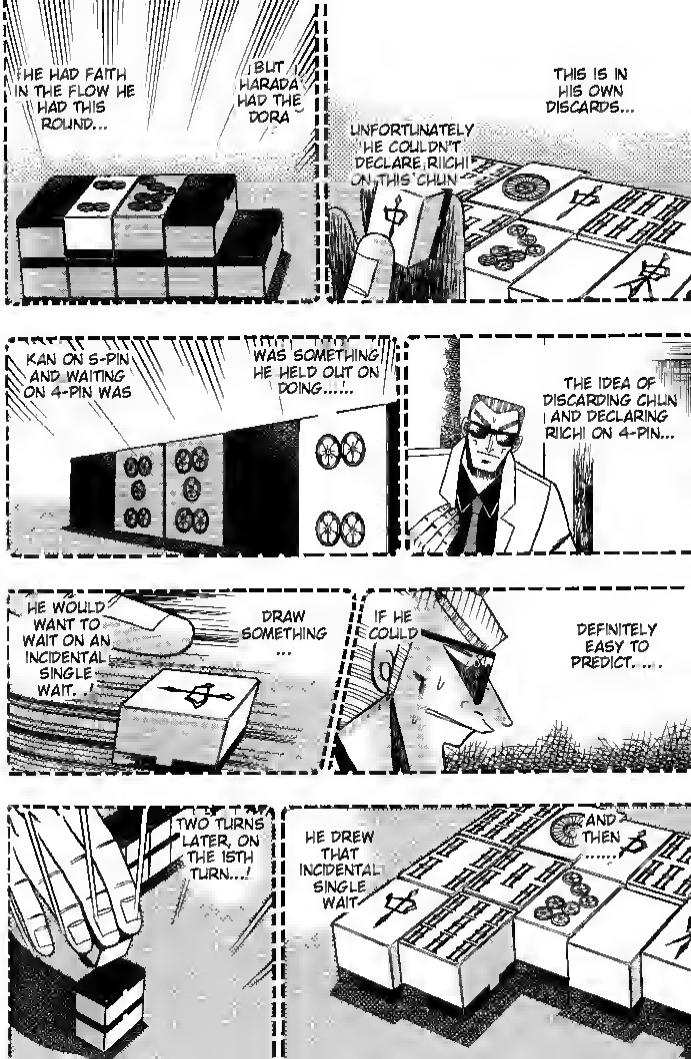

AND CHANGE TO A PURE SINGLE WAIT
WHEN DRAWING SOMETHING TO DISCARD 4-PIN


ESPECIALLY THE 6-PIN, WHICH IS ON THE MATAGI SUJI (6-9-PIN) FOR 8-PIN
IT WAAS IN AN EASY TO DETECT PLACE.


HE DREW 5-PIN .....!

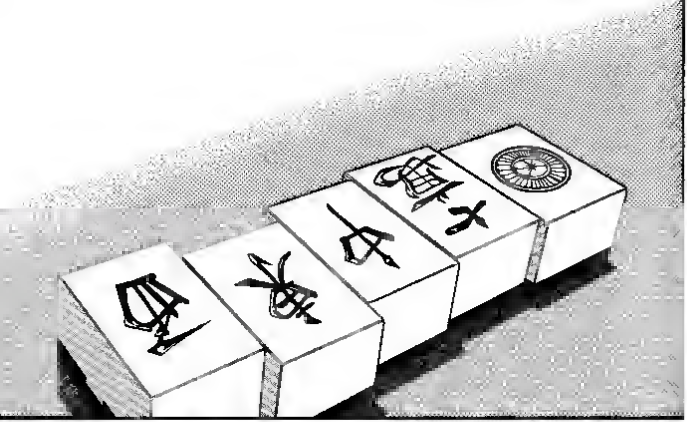

IF HE DID WELL ON THE RINSHAN DRAW, HE COULD HAVE A MUCH MORE IDEAL TILE...
HE WOULD HAVE A 4-PIN SINGLE WAIT.
IF HE DID KAN
HE DIDN'T NEED TO KAN ON 5-PIN AT PRESENT, BUT...


AND WHEN HE DID THAT...!
HARADA MADE THAT KAN ...!
THINKING THAT
EVEN A CANDIDATE FOR AN IDEAL SINGLE WAIT .....!
SINCE THE TILE HE DREW FROM THE RINSHAN DRAW WAS CHUN...
AN INCREDIBLE NEW DORA ...!


HE HAD FAITH IN THE FLOW HE HAD THIS ROUND...
BUT HARADA HAD THE DORA
THIS IS IN HIS OWN DISCARDS...
UNFORTUNATELY HE COULDN'T DECLARE RICHI ON THIS CHUN
KAN ON 5-PIN AND WAITING ON 4-PIN WAS
WAS SOMETHING HE HELD OUT ON DOING....!..
THE IDEA OF DISCARDING CHUN AND DECLARING RICHI ON 4-PIN...
HE WOULD WANT TO WAIT ON AN INCIDENTAL SINGLE WAIT...
DRAW SOMETHING ...
IF HE COULD
DEFINITELY EASY TO PREDICT. ....
TWO TURNS LATER, ON THE 15TH TURN...!
HE DREW THAT INCIDENTAL SINGLE WAIT
AND THEN .....

IN SHORT...
AND DECLARED TENPAI...!
THEN HE FINALLY DROPPED THE 4-PIN FROM HIS HAND...
SINGLE WAIT.....!
RIGHT NOW... HARADA IS WAITING ON THAT "SOMETHING" HE DREW BY CHANCE....
ON THAT INCIDENTAL SINGLE WAIT...!
KEN'S PREDICT-IONS WERE
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THAT, THERE'S NO DOUBT...!
THE ONLY THING YOU COULD IMAGINE WAS KAN ON 5-PIN, DEAL 4-PIN AND DECLARE TENPAI
THE SAME AS TEN'S, TOO.

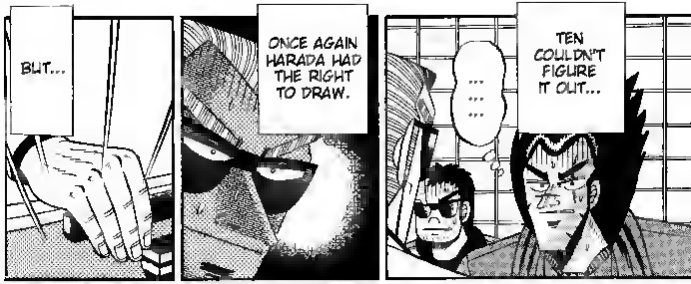
THE FIRST
A SINGLE WAIT GAVE HIM THE MOST TROUBLE.....!
THERE WERE NO CLUES TO MAKE A PREDICTION FROM.
HATSU AND SHA.....!
ONE OF TEN'S SELECTIONS WAS
AN INCIDENTAL SINGLE WAIT THAT EASILY.
HE WOULDN'T PICK OUT
WRONG...!
BUT...
AS WAS HIS RIGHT...!
HARADA DREW FIVE TIMES...



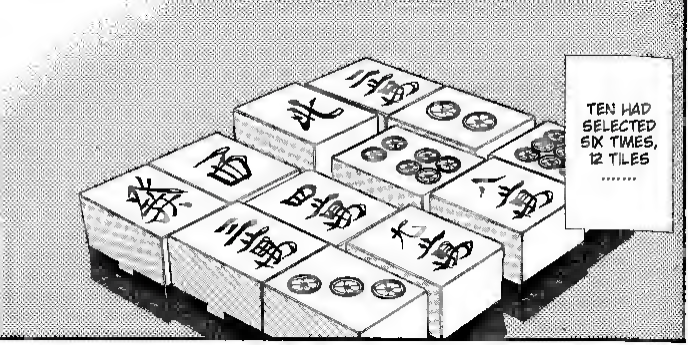
AGAIN, TEN'S DETEC TION
.....
FIVE DRAWS, BUT NO WINNING TILE.
HE DIDN'T DRAW IT .....!

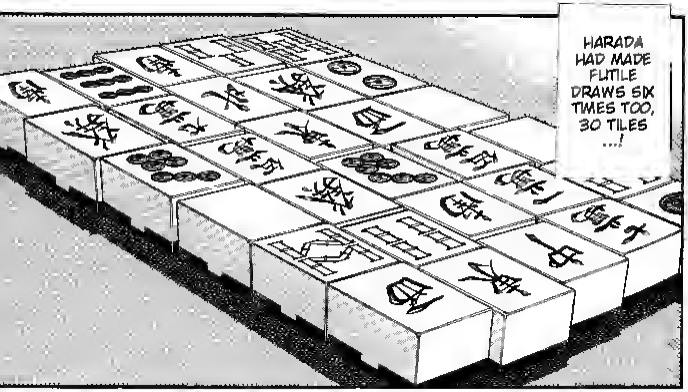
PEI AND 2-MAN ...!
HIS 2ND PICK ...

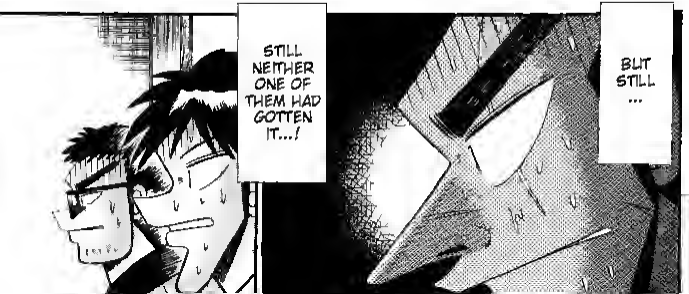
WRONG ...!


BUT...
ONCE AGAIN HARADA HAD THE RIGHT TO DRAW.
... ...
TEN COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT...

BEFORE LONG ...
TEN DIDN'T FIGURE IT OUT, AND HARADA DIDN'T DRAW IT.
IT REPE-ATED.
FIVE USELESS DRAWS AGAIN.
HARADA DIDN'T DRAW IT EITHER.


TEN HAD SELECTED SIX TIMES, 12 TILES .....


HARADA HAD MADE FUTILE DRAWS SIX TIMES TOO, 30 TILES ...!


STILL NEITHER ONE OF THEM HAD GOTTEN IT...!
BUT STILL ...

STILL ...!

FTER THIS LONG ...
HEH HEH ...
KH ...!

BEYOND THE CONCERN THAT HARADA WOULD BE ABLE TO DRAW IT .....
ANOTHER CONCERN AROSE.
IN SHORT ...
THE WORRY HE WAS GOING TO RUN OUT
OF THE TIME LEFT IN THE MATCH ....!

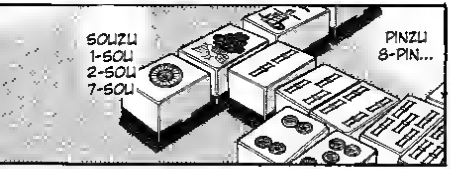
... ...
ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT,

TWO MINUTES ARE ALREADY GONE... BARELY A MINUTE LEFT...
IF THINGS KEEP DRAGGING ON LIKE THIS
OR EVEN IF HARADA DRAWS IT...
DEFEAT ...!

IT'S ALL OVER ...!
IF THE FINAL BELL RINGS ...
TEN ...!
WHAT'S GOING ON...!
SHIT ...!

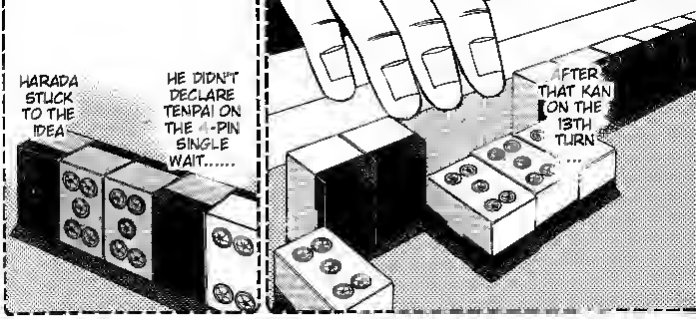
HARADA. YOU DIRTY BASTARD
THAT I'M BEING DRIVEN INTO A CORNER LIKE THIS ...
..... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.....

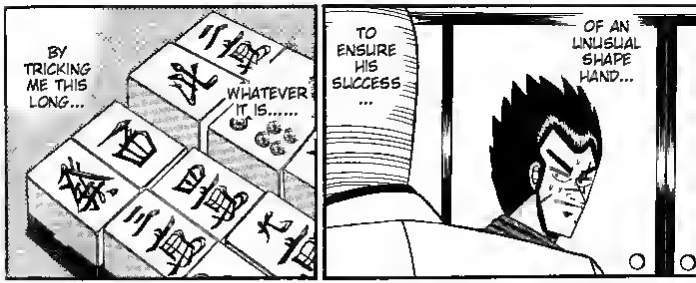
WHAT THE HELL... ARE YOU WAITING ON.....!?

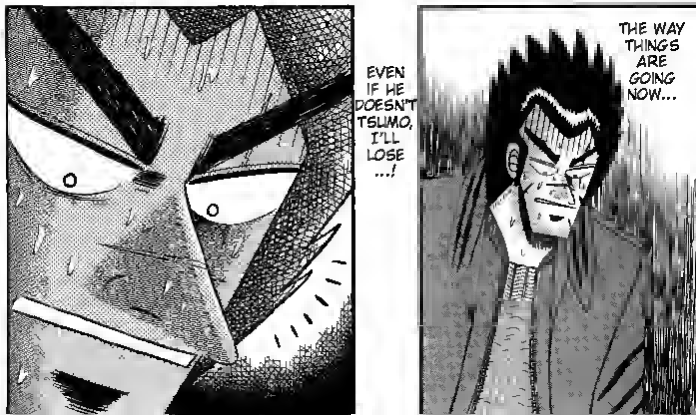

SOUZU 1-SOU 2-SOU 7-SOU
PINZU 8-PIN...

SHIT ...!
ONLY THOSE FIVE TILES ...!

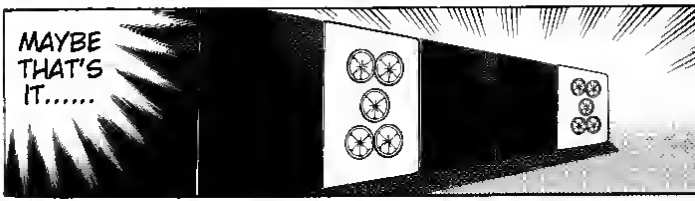
MANZU 6-MAN...
WHAT'S LEFT NOW IS.....

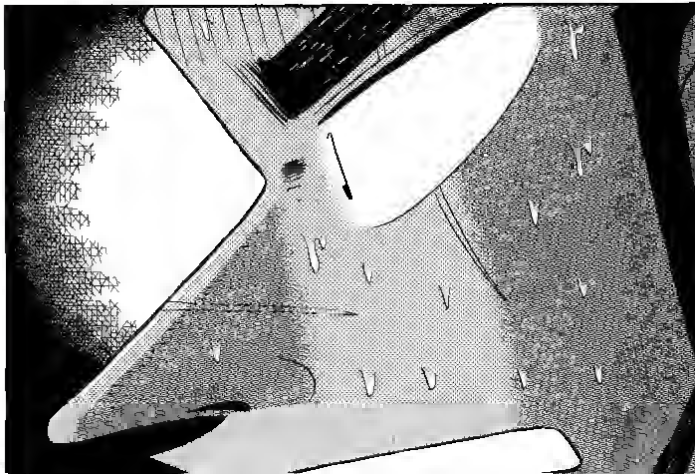

HARADA STUCK TO THE IDEA
HE DIDN'T DECLARE TENPAI ON THE 4-PIN SINGLE WAIT.....
AFTER THAT KAN ON THE 13TH TURN


BY TRICKING ME THIS LONG...
WHATEVER IT IS.....
TO ENSURE HIS SUCCESS ...
OF AN UNUSUAL SHAPE HAND...


EVEN IF HE DOESN'T TSUMO, I'LL LOSE ...!
THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING NOW...

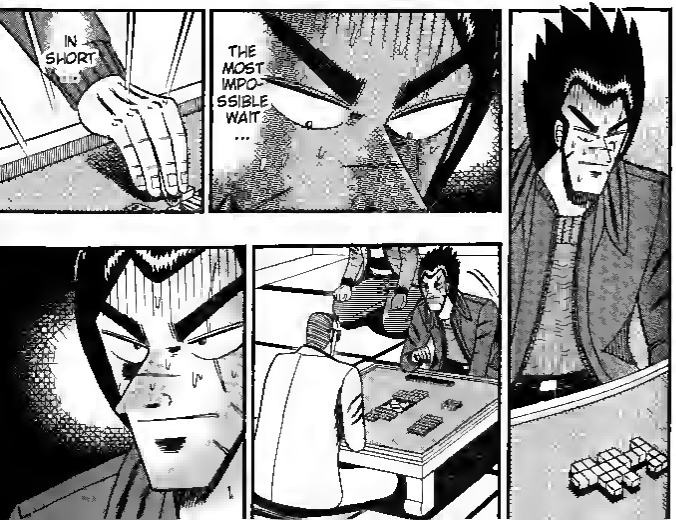
HOLD ON.....
URGH ...!


MAYBE THAT'S IT.....

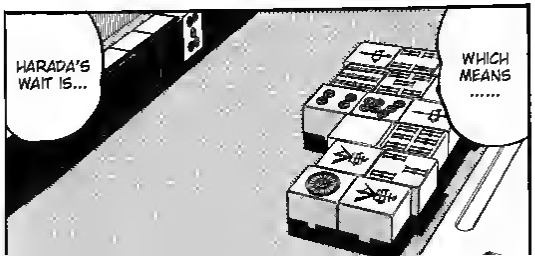


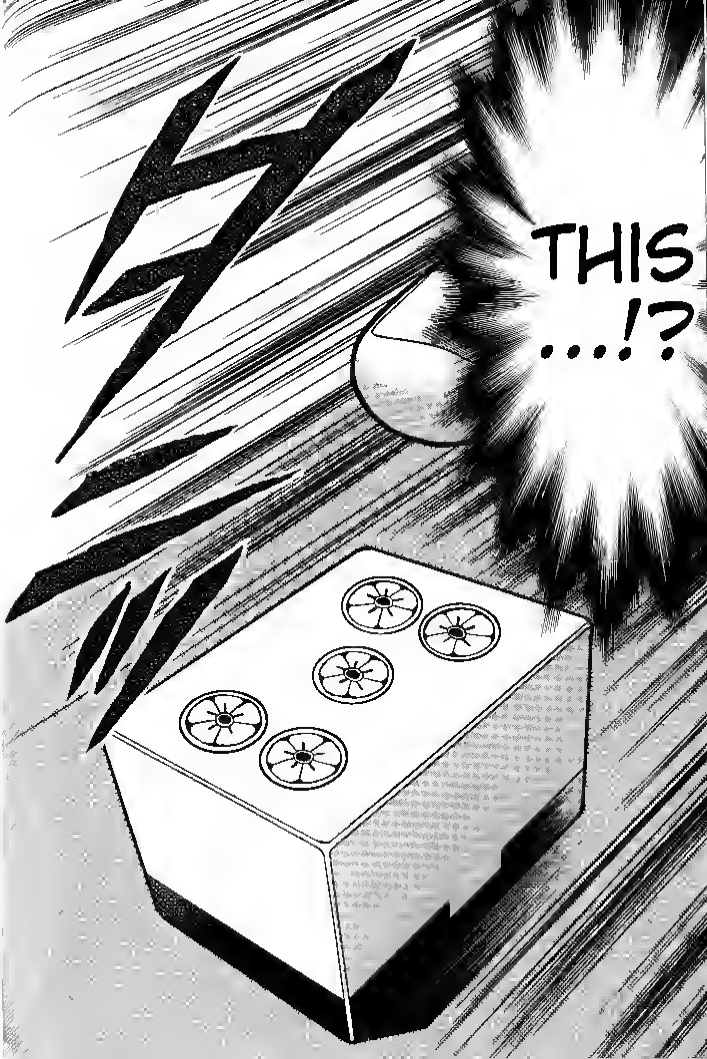
CHAPTER 124
TIME UP

TO RUN OUT OF TIME .....!?
HARADA'S GOAL IS .....
MAYBE THAT'S IT.....


IN SHORT ...
THE MOST IMPO-SSIBLE WAIT ...

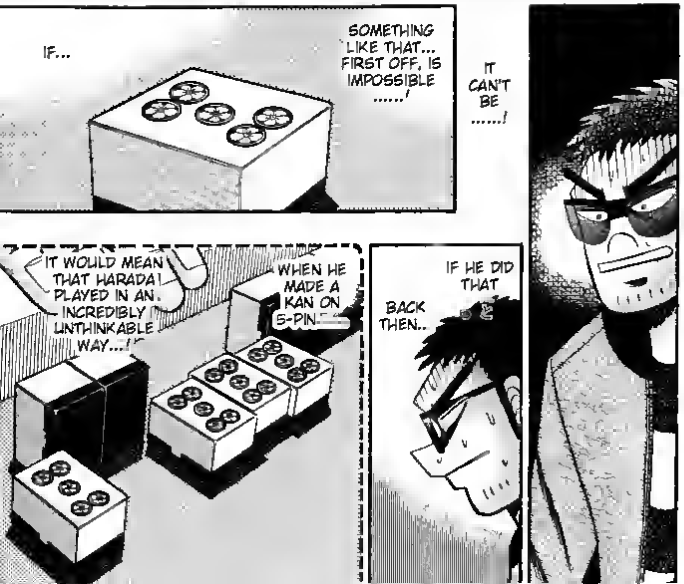
HIS GOAL IS TO RUN OUT OF TIME...
JUST MAY-BE
OF WINNING ...
THIS TIME, HARADA HAD NO INTENTION

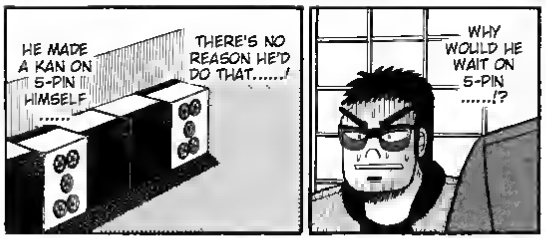

HARADA'S WAIT IS...
WHICH MEANS .....

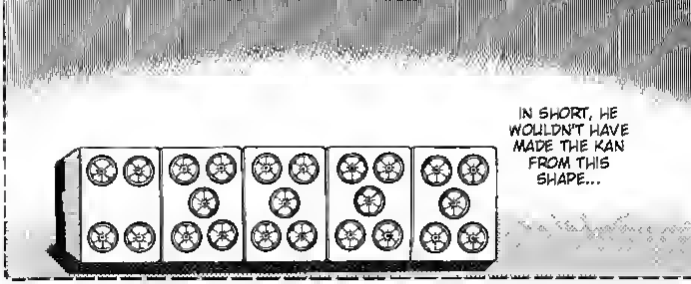

THIS
...!?

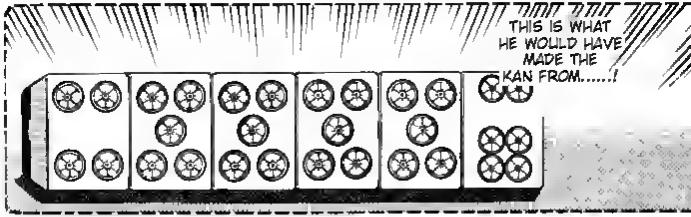
THAT'S CRAZY.....!
GH....!

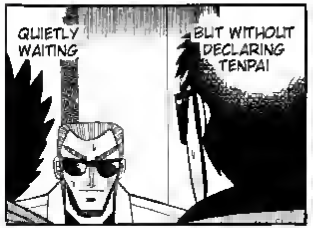
IT CAN'T BE 5-PIN ...!


IF...
SOMETHING LIKE THAT... FIRST OFF, IS IMPOSSIBLE .....!
IT CAN'T BE .....!
IT WOULD MEAN THAT HARADA PLAYED IN AN INCREDIBLY UNTHINKABLE WAY...!
WHEN HE MADE A KAN ON 5-PIN.
BACK THEN..
IF HE DID THAT

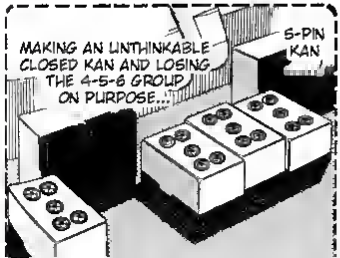


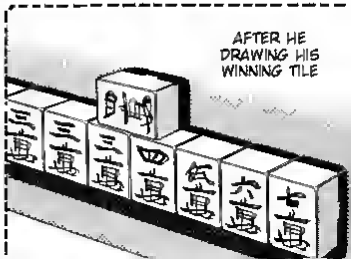

IN SHORT, HE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE THE KAN FROM THIS SHAPE...

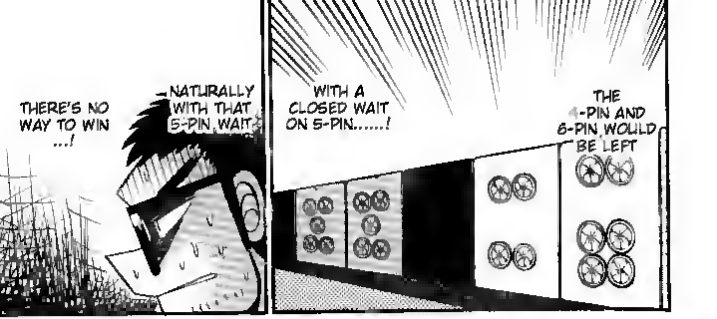

THIS IS WHAT HE WOULD HAVE MADE THE KAN FROM.....!


QUIETLY WAITING
BUT WITHOUT DECLARING TENPAI

WAS ALREADY IN TENPAI
BACK THEN, MAYBE HARADA


MAKING AN UNTHINKABLE CLOSED KAN AND LOSING THE 4-5-6 GROUP ON PURPOSE...
5-PIN KAN

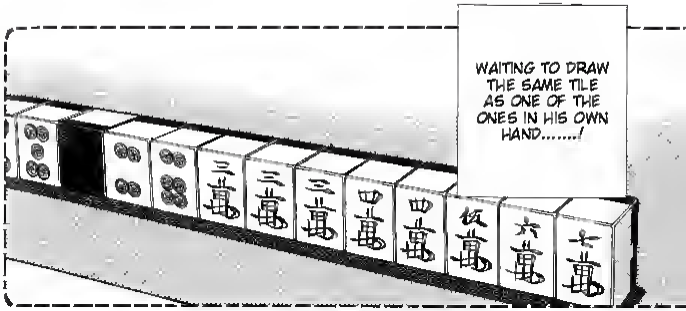

AFTER HE DRAWING HIS WINNING TILE

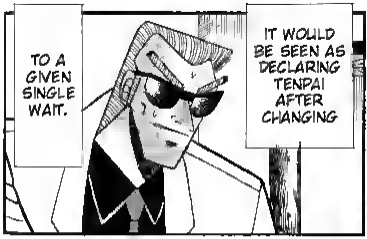

THERE'S NO WAY TO WIN ...!
NATURALLY WITH THAT 5-PIN WAIT
WITH A CLOSED WAIT ON 5-PIN.....!
THE 4-PIN AND 6-PIN WOULD BE LEFT

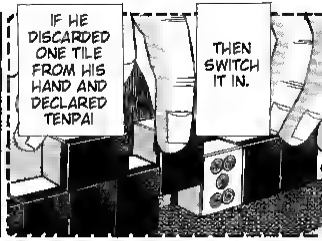
IT CAN'T BE...
TO RUN OUT OF TIME .....!
HIS GOAL WOULD BE

BUT ...
THAT CAN'T BE WHAT IT IS.....!

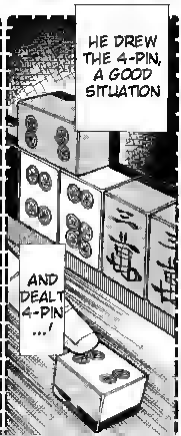
バラ…
TO BE SURE HIS TRAP WOULD WORK
HIS GOAL WAS TO IDLY WHITTLE AWAY AT TEN'S REMAINING TIME...
A TRAP ...!
CONTINUED TO DRAW AND DISCARD FOR A FEW TURNS.
EVEN AFTER GETTING HIS 4-8-PIN WAIT SET UP
(THERE ARE ALSO RULES WHERE RICHI ON A HAND THAT HAS NO CHANCE OF WINNING ARE INVALID BUT THIS IS ACCEPTED IN TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.)
HARADA HAD A CLOSED WAIT ON 5-PIN .....!
GH ...!
IT WAS ...!

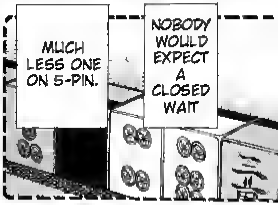

WAITING TO DRAW THE SAME TILE AS ONE OF THE ONES IN HIS OWN HAND.....!

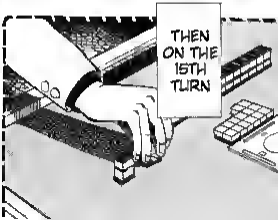

TO A GIVEN SINGLE WAIT.
IT WOULD BE SEEN AS DECLARING TENPAI AFTER CHANGING


IF HE DISCARDED ONE TILE FROM HIS HAND AND DECLARED TENPAI
THEN SWITCH IT IN.

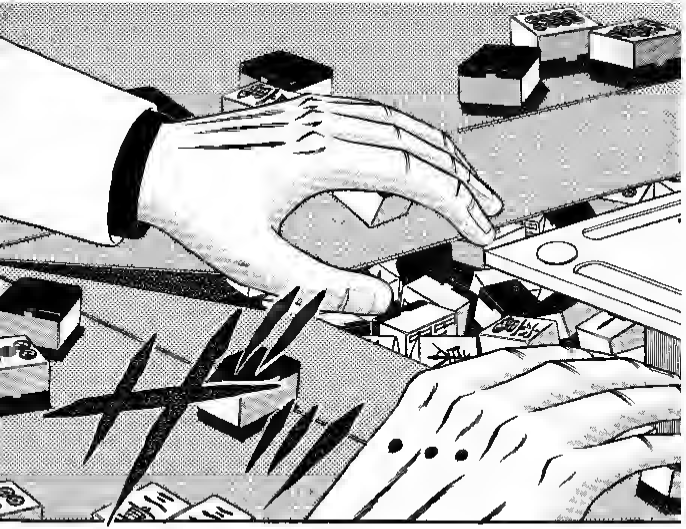
WHEN HE MADE A KAN ON THE 5-PIN AND PLAYED 4-PIN, ANYONE WOULD IMAGINE HE CHANGED TO A SINGLE WAIT...
BUT ...
AND WITH NOTHING MORE THAN THIS, HE BUILT A TRAP.

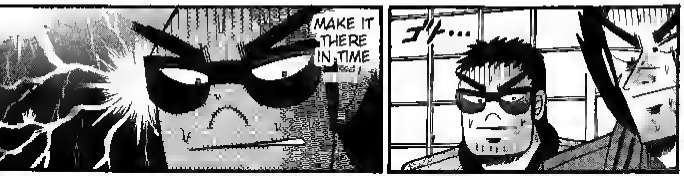

HE DREW THE 4-PIN, A GOOD SITUATION
AND DEALT 4-PIN ...!

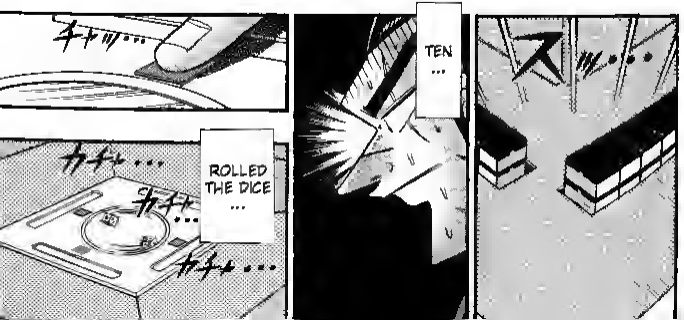

MUCH LESS ONE ON 5-PIN.
NOBODY WOULD EXPECT A CLOSED WAIT


THEN ON THE 15TH TURN

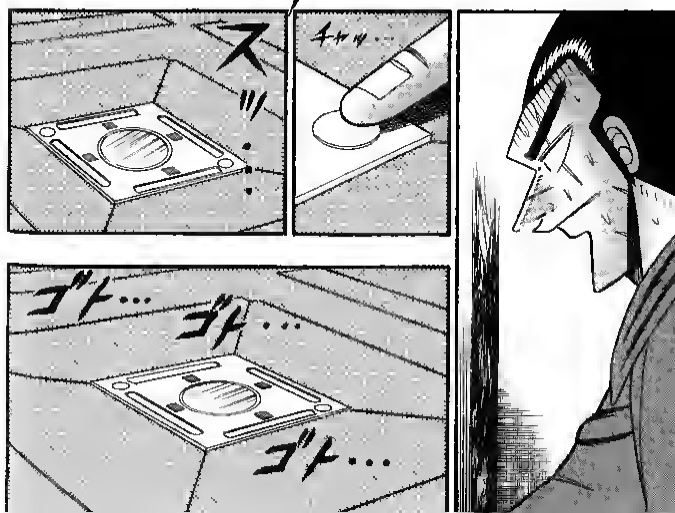
AT THE LAST MOMENT
HE ESCAPED FOR NOW ...!
BUT ...
FROM THOSE CURSED BONDS ...
AND STOPPED THIS FRUITLESS WASTE OF TIME.
TEN REALIZED IT
WE STILL... DON'T KNOW .....!
IF THE FINAL BELL RINGS, IT'S OVER...!
THE TIME... RIGHT NOW...

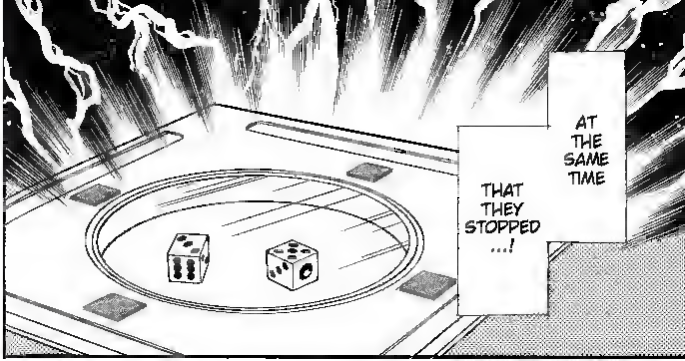


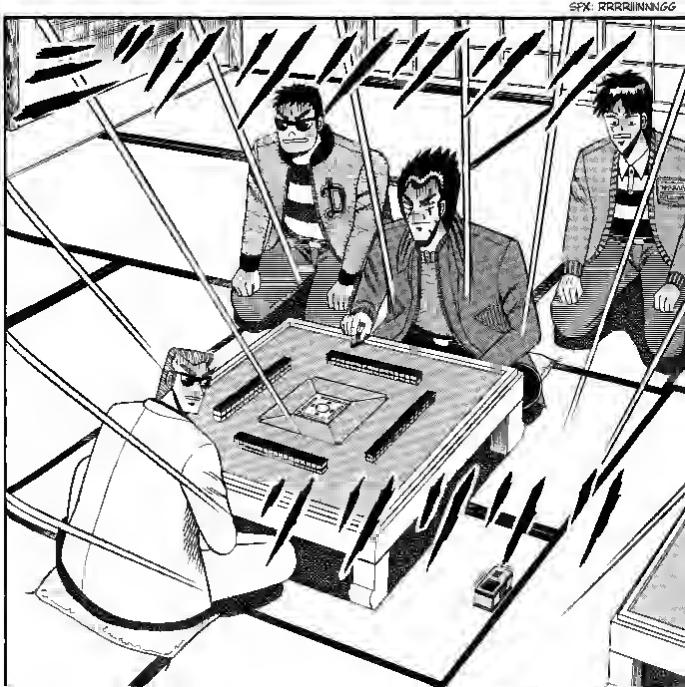

MAKE IT THERE IN TIME
ゴト…


カチャ…
ROLLED THE DICE …
TEN …

IT WOULD BE OVER ……!


ゴト…
ゴト…
ゴト…

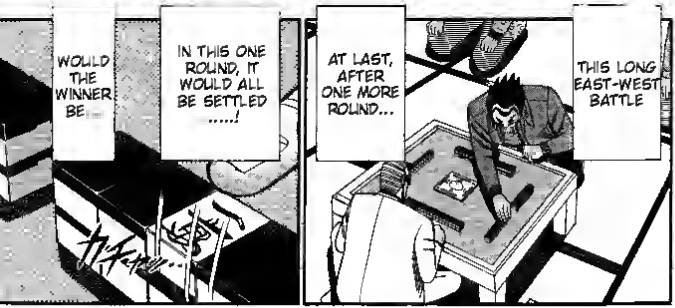

AT THE SAME TIME
THAT THEY STOPPED ...!


SFX: RRRRIINNGG

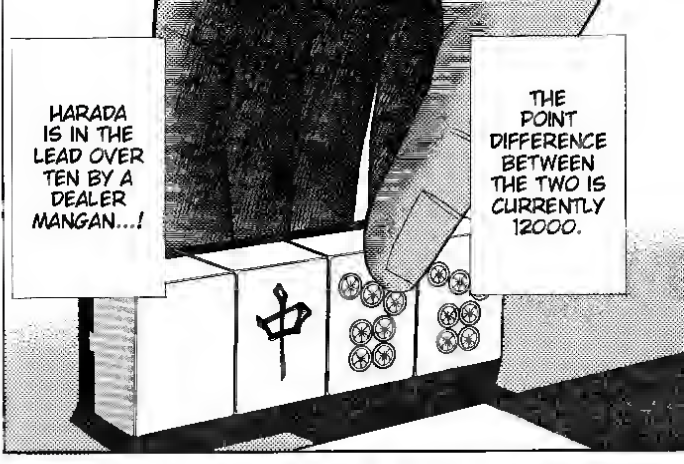
THE BELL RANG...!
カチャリ…
THE BELL THAT SIGNALLED THE END OF THE MATCH .....
.....
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO .....
THE DICE WERE ROLLED.
HEH HEH ...
BUT ...
I'LL ACCEPT THAT WE JUST BARELY MADE IT INTO THE 17TH ROUND.

IT'S REALLY OVER AFTER ONE MORE ROUND.....!
THIS IS THE LAST ROUND ....
A FINAL BATTLE .....!

THE FINAL BATTLE .....!


WOULD THE WINNER BE...
IN THIS ONE ROUND, IT WOULD ALL BE SETTLED .....!
AT LAST, AFTER ONE MORE ROUND...
THIS LONG EAST-WEST BATTLE

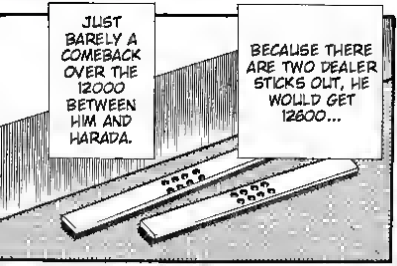
OR TEN ...!?
HARADA ...!?


HARADA IS IN THE LEAD OVER TEN BY A DEALER MANGAN...!
THE POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO IS CURRENTLY 12000.

HARADA WOULD WIN...!
IF NOTHING CHANGED
RIGHT NOW

ESCAPE DETECTION OF HIS TENPAI IN STAGE B
AND ...
HE FIRST HAD TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE TENPAI RACE THAT WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN
FOR TEN TO WIN

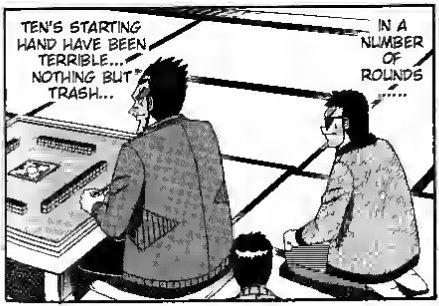
HE HAS TO WIN WITH A DEALER MANGAN.
FOR A HAND WORTH 12000...


JUST BARELY A COMEBACK OVER THE 12000 BETWEEN HIM AND HARADA.
BECAUSE THERE ARE TWO DEALER STICKS OUT, HE WOULD GET 12800...

IF HE WON WITH A DEALER MANGAN ...

MAKE A COME-BACK ...!

MANGAN ...!


TEN'S STARTING HAND HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE... NOTHING BUT TRASH...
IN A NUMBER OF ROUNDS ...

COME ON...!

THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE !

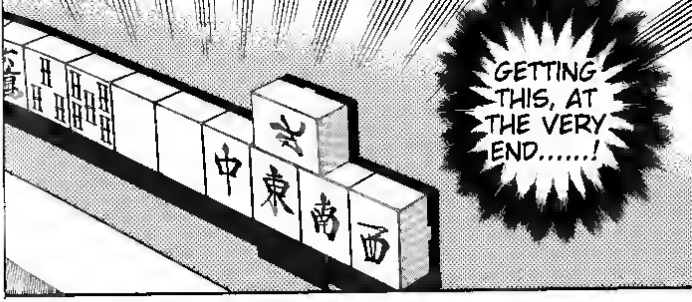
SHOULD HAVE SWUNG BACK HIS WAY ALREADY..
THE FLOW

ENOUGH ALREADY ...!

A GOOD STARTING HAND.....!
THIS ONE, RIGHT HERE ...!
THE LAST ONE .....!

THE 17TH MATCH.
THE FINAL BATTLE.
THE GAME THAT WOULD SETTLE IT ALL.
THIS ONE ...!
TEN'S ...
THIS WAS THE VERY LAST ONE, THE END OF THE LINE.

STARTING HAND...!
URGH ...!
THAT STARTING HAND...
UUURGH .....!


GETTING THIS, AT THE VERY END.....!

TEN.....!

天

CHAPTER 125

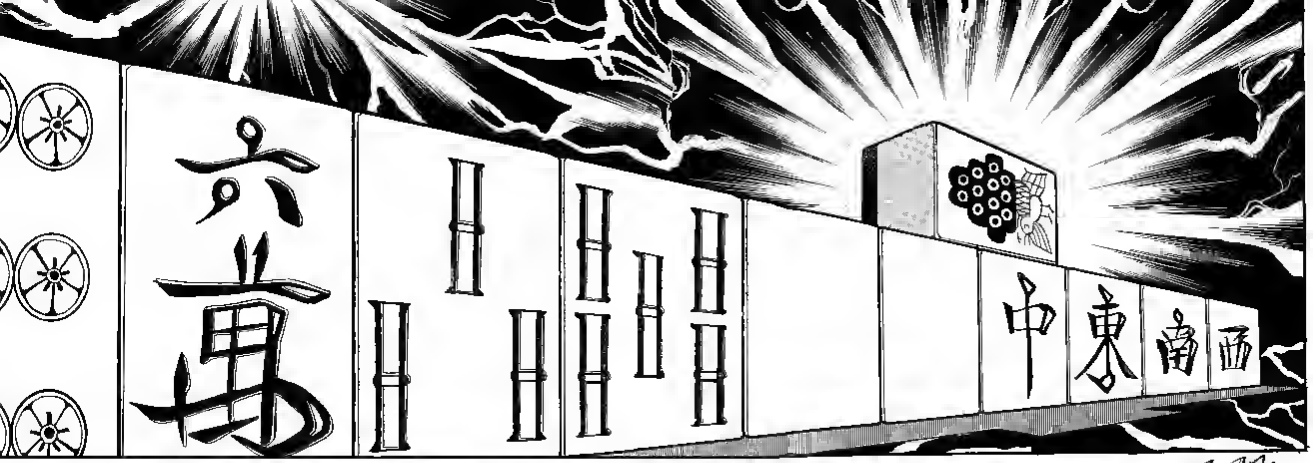
MISFORTUNE

ざわ…
ざわ…
THE 17TH BATTLE, FINAL MATCH.
TEN …
Oo
TEN …!
KH …!
WHAT HE HAD TO WORK WITH WAS… THIS…!
HE HAD TO CONSTRUCT A PATH TO MANGAN AND A COMEBACK VICTORY.
A TRASH HAND …!
IN THIS FINAL HOUR, THE HAND DEALT TO TEN WAS …
中
東
南
西

A POOR SHAPED 4-SHAN-TEN...!
WHAT DID COME WAS
BUT ...
A STARTING HAND DRAGGED DOWN BY THE PAST FEW ROUNDS' BAD FLOW
IT DIDN'T COME TO TEN.
IN THE END
DIDN'T COME TO HIM ...
A STARTING HAND THAT WOULD SAVE HIM FROM DEFEAT...

BUT...!

AS USUAL
TEN DIDN'T LOOK DISCOURAGED ...!
JUST ...
MOVING STRAIGHT AHEAD.
JUST ...
STRAIGHT AHEAD...!

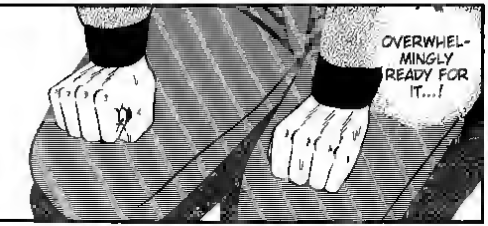


TRYING TO BEAR IT...!

NOT LETTING HIMSELF BE DISAPPOINTED.
REFUSING TO BE FOOLED ...!
THAT WAS THE THOUGHT HE BORE.
NOR HIS LIFE WOULD BE DETERMINED BY THAT ...!

AND GOING FORWARD .....!
BEARING IT WITH MATURITY
ドン
FOR-WARD ...!
FORWARD ...!

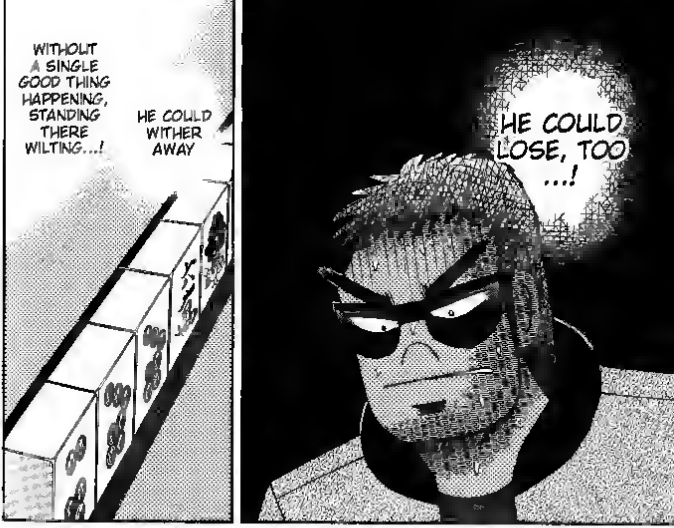
FORWARD ....!

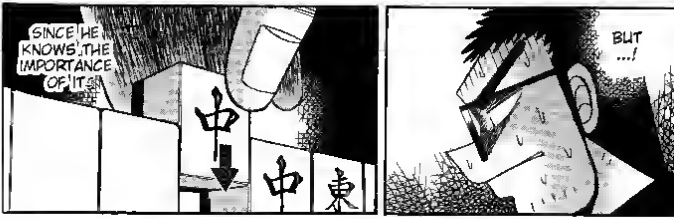

OVERWHEL-MINGLY READY FOR IT...!

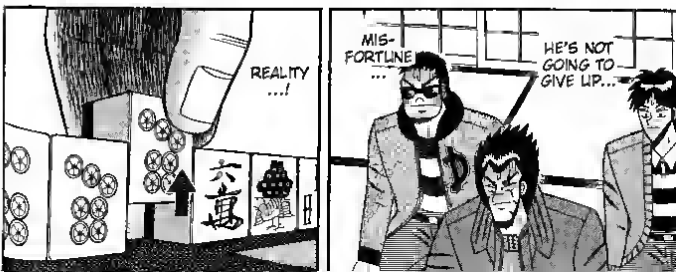
.....
.....

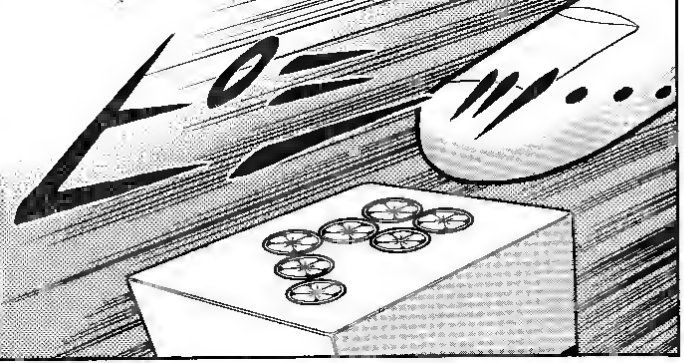
HE'S NOT REJECTING THAT ITSELF...!
THAT COULD HAPPEN...

WITH THIS AMOUNT OF MISFORTUNE, HE COULD LOSE, TOO...


WITHOUT A SINGLE GOOD THING HAPPENING, STANDING THERE WILTING...!
HE COULD WITHER AWAY
HE COULD LOSE, TOO ...!


SINCE HE KNOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF IT...
中
中
東
BUT ...!


REALITY ...!
六萬
MIS-FORTUNE ...
HE'S NOT GOING TO GIVE UP...


LOSE...

THE ABILITY...
TO TAKE ON WHATEVER COMES YOUR WAY...
IT'S HARD.....

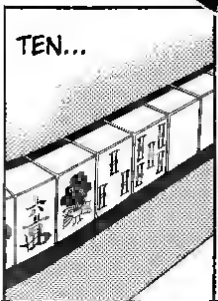
HE WON'T LET I GO.!!

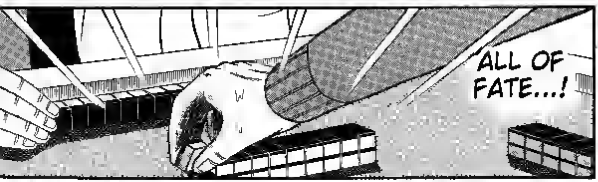
GO ON AHEAD.....!

SO IT GOES...!
EVEN IF IT WAS ME MYSELF.....
IF IT WAS ME.....

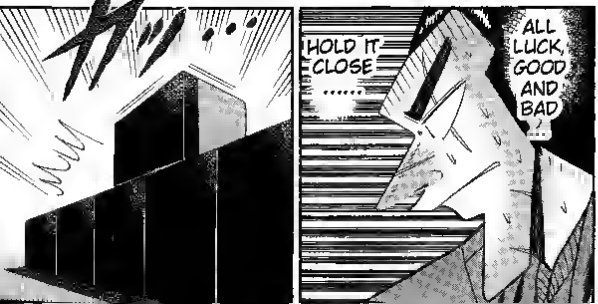
BUT.....

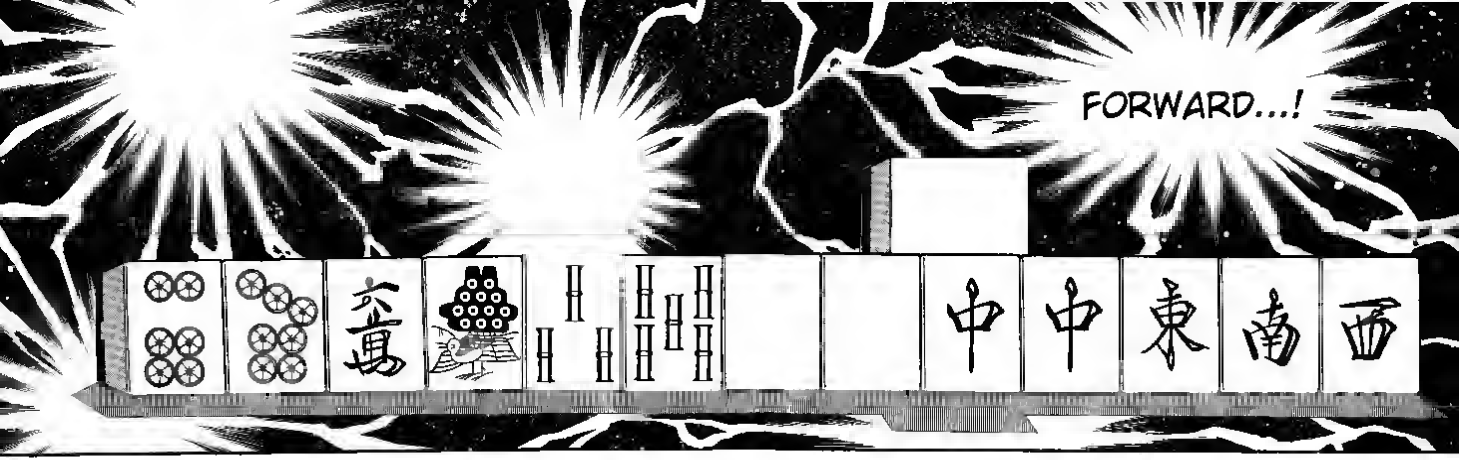
DON'T RUN AWAY ...!

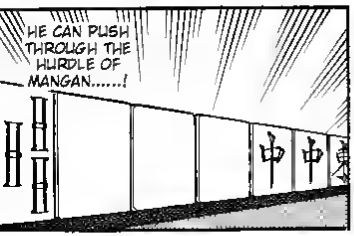


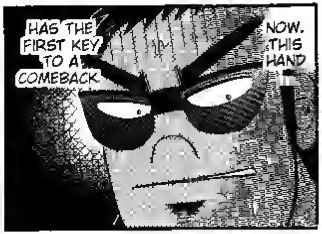


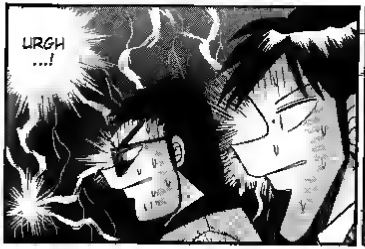
ENDURE...!

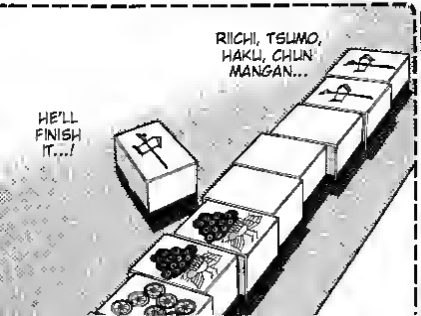


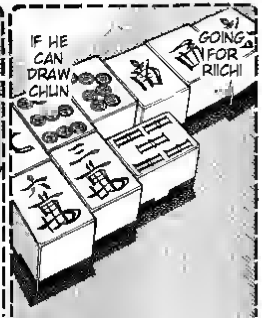

FORWARD...!


HE CAN PUSH THROUGH THE HURDLE OF MANGAN.....!


HAS THE FIRST KEY TO A COMEBACK
NOW. THIS HAND


URGH ...!

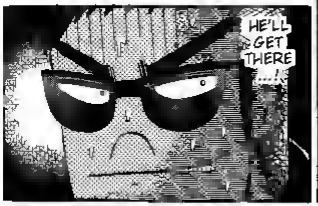

HE'LL FINISH IT...!
RIICHI, TSUMO, HAKU, CHUN MANGAN...

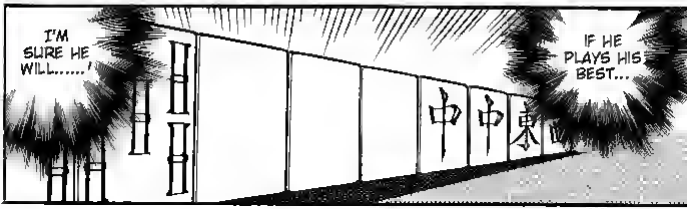

IF HE CAN DRAW CHUN
GOING FOR RIICHI

..... I CAN SEE IT NOW ...!

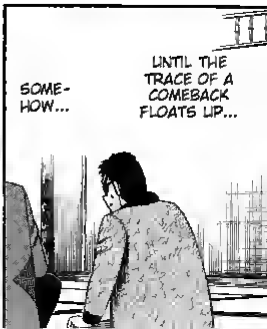
HE GOT IT...!

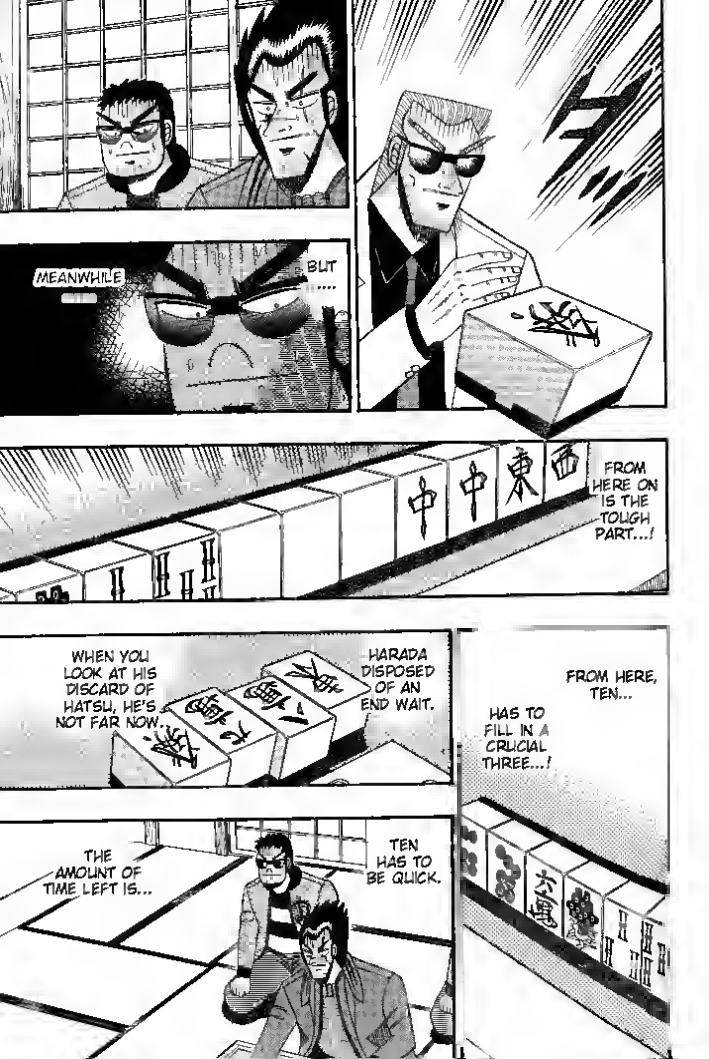
ピミル


HE'LL GET THERE...!


I'M SURE HE WILL.....!
IF HE PLAYS HIS BEST...
中
中
東

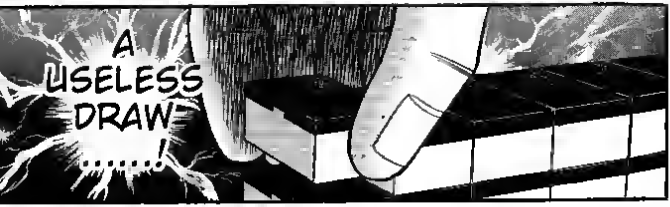
HE WILL .....!
HE'LL GET THERE .....!


SOME-HOW...
UNTIL THE TRACE OF A COMEBACK FLOATS UP...

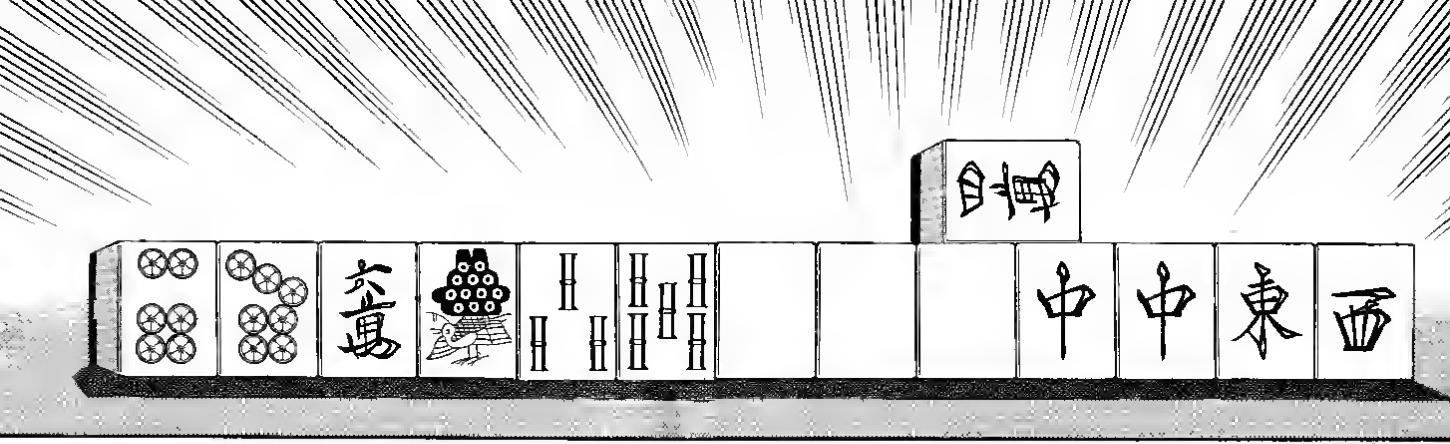

MEANWHILE
BUT ....
FROM HERE ON IS THE TOUGH PART...!
WHEN YOU LOOK AT HIS DISCARD OF HATSU, HE'S NOT FAR NOW.
HARADA DISPOSED OF AN END WAIT.
FROM HERE, TEN... HAS TO FILL IN A CRUCIAL THREE...!
THE AMOUNT OF TIME LEFT IS...
TEN HAS TO BE QUICK.

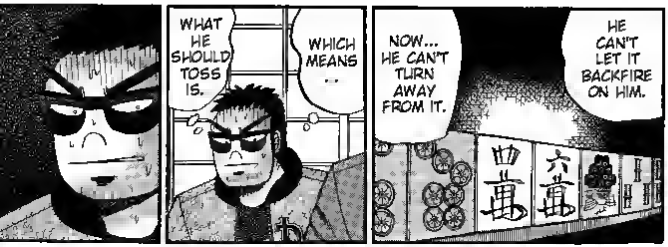
SLIM ...!
THERE'S NO ROOM FOR TEN TO MAKE A MISTAKE ...!

A MISTAKE OR EVEN ...
NO ...


A USELESS DRAW .....!

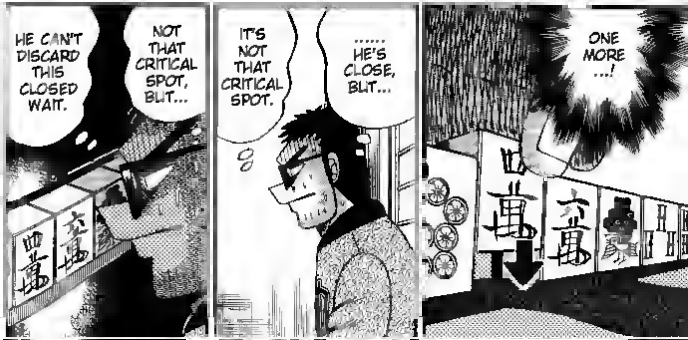
DRAW IT...!
SO THEN .....
THERE'S LITTLE ROOM FOR A LOSS LIKE THAT TOO..




WHAT HE SHOULD TOSS IS.
WHICH MEANS...
NOW... HE CAN'T TURN AWAY FROM IT.
HE CAN'T LET IT BACKFIRE ON HIM.

KH...!

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE IN THIS SITUATION...!
IT SEEMS LIKE A BAD IDEA SINCE IT'S HARADA'S WIND, BUT...
SHA...


HE CAN'T DISCARD THIS CLOSED WAIT.
NOT THAT CRITICAL SPOT, BUT...
IT'S NOT THAT CRITICAL SPOT.
..... HE'S CLOSE, BUT...
ONE MORE...!

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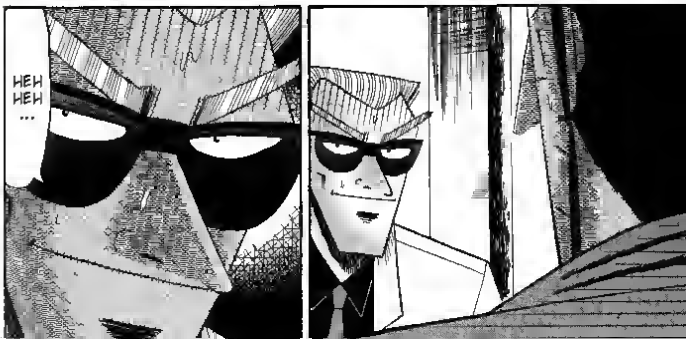
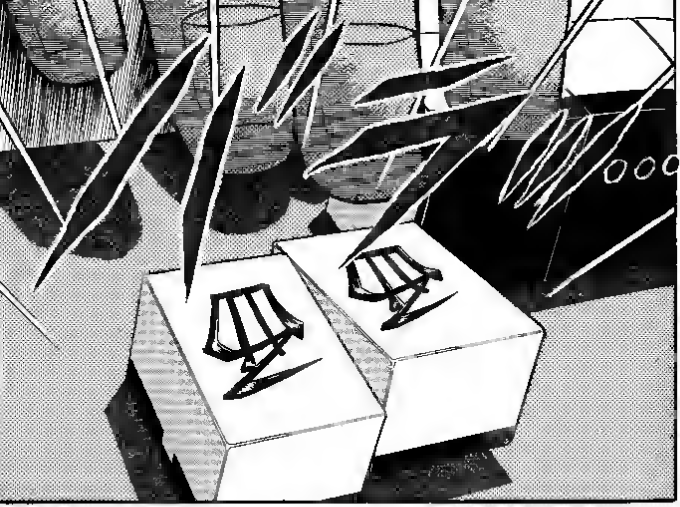
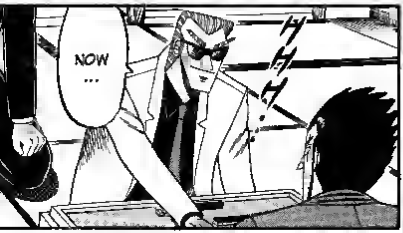
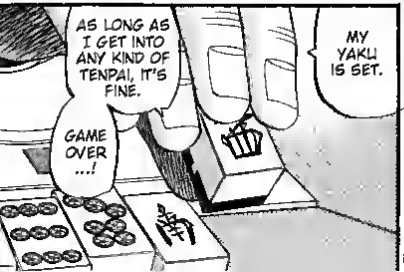

HEH
HEH
...



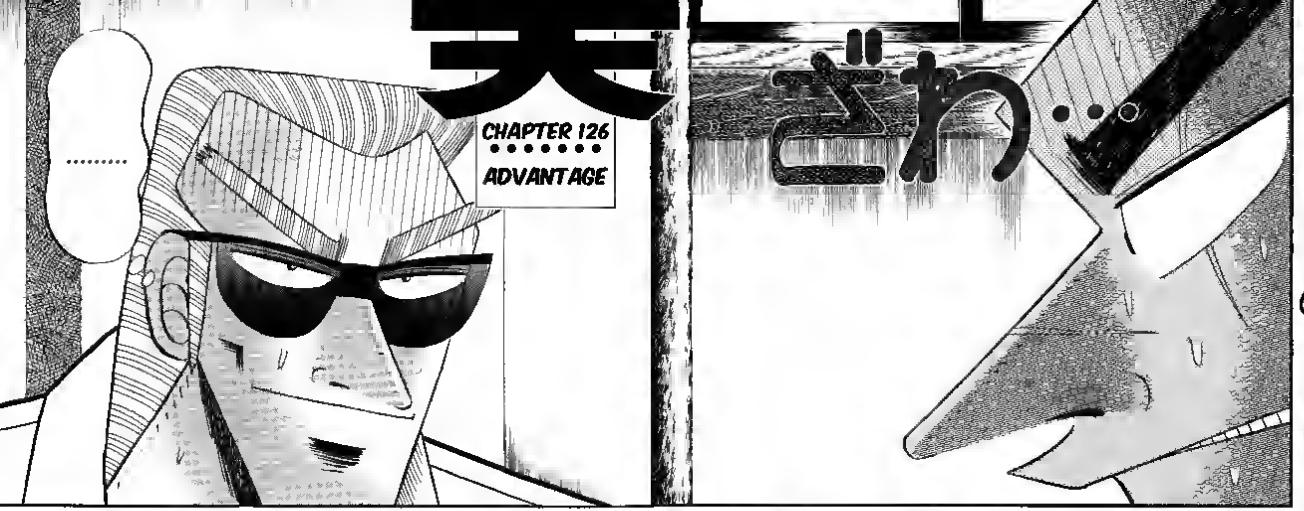

NOW ...

GH ...!
PON ...!


AS LONG AS I GET INTO ANY KIND OF TENPAI, IT'S FINE.
MY YAKU IS SET.
GAME OVER ...!

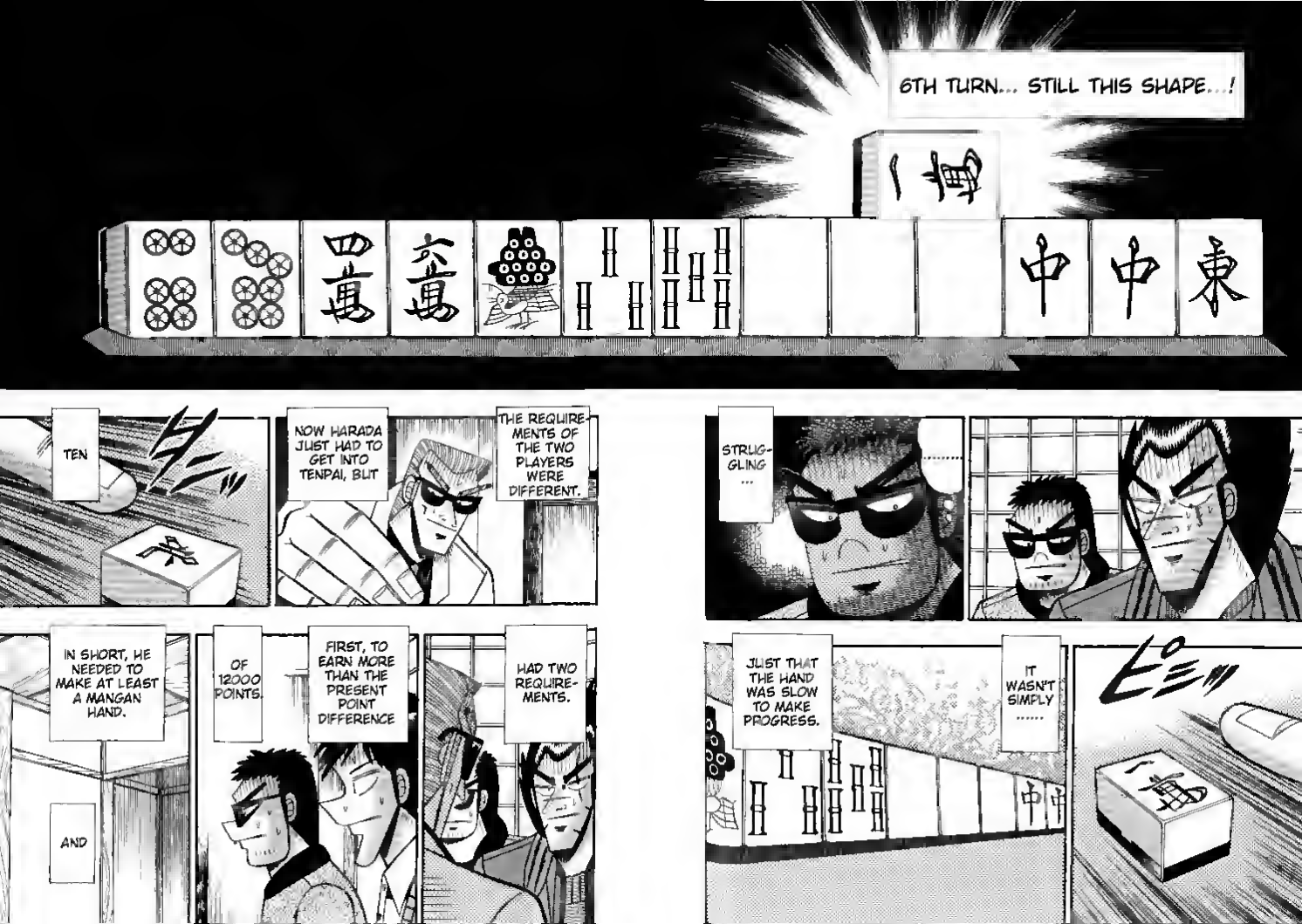
I'LL WIN....!

HARADA
...
TOOK
THE
FIRST
STEP
.....


.....
CHAPTER 126
ADVANTAGE
ざわ…
TAKING CONTROL FIRST …!

AS LONG AS HE KEPT CALLING AND ENDED UP AND TENPAI
HE'D WIN …!
WITHOLT STRAINING TO GET THERE
NOW, IT WASN'T NECESSARY TO STICK TO A CLOSED HAND.
ON THE OTHER HAND, TEN…

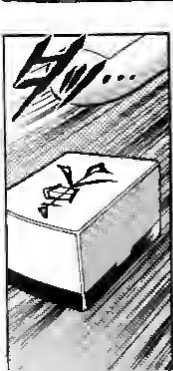
PON ON HIS OWN WIND, SHA…!
ざわ…ざわ


6TH TURN... STILL THIS SHAPE...!
TEN
NOW HARADA JUST HAD TO GET INTO TENPAI, BUT
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TWO PLAYERS WERE DIFFERENT.
STRUGGLING ...
IN SHORT, HE NEEDED TO MAKE AT LEAST A MANGAN HAND.
AND
OF 12000 POINTS.
FIRST, TO EARN MORE THAN THE PRESENT POINT DIFFERENCE
HAD TWO REQUIREMENTS.
JUST THAT THE HAND WAS SLOW TO MAKE PROGRESS.
IT WASN'T SIMPLY .....

THE DETECTION PHASE, STAGE B ...!

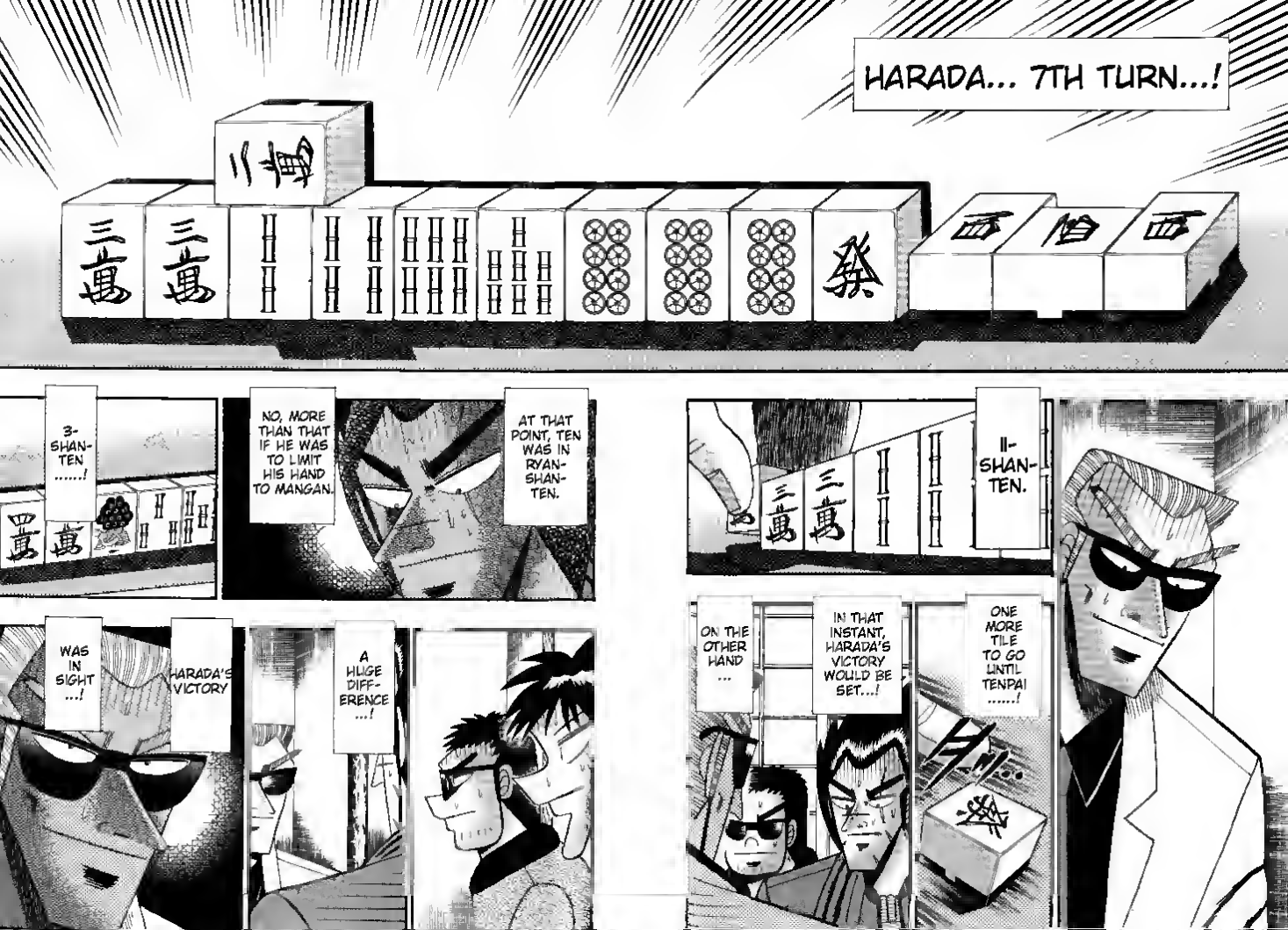
HAD TO BE SURE HARADA'S PREDICTION WOULD BE WRONG.
WHILE MAKING A MANGAN HAND, TEN

IN SHORT
HE NEEDED TO MAKE A HAND TO AVOID THAT.


ﾀﾘ...

ﾀﾘ
THOSE TWO FETTERS .....!

HE NEEDED GOOD LUCK...!
WOULDN'T MAKE UP FOR THE DIFFERENCE AT PRESENT BETWEEN THE TWO PLAYERS.
PLAYING LIKE HE WOULD IN NORMAL MAHJONG
HE NEEDED HIS INTUITION ...!
THE FLOW WASN'T RIGHT FOR THAT .....!

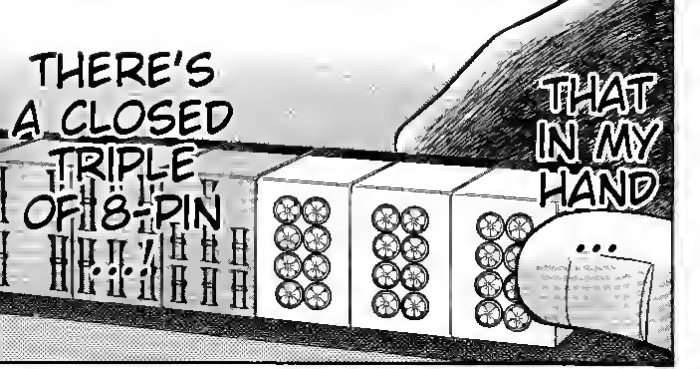

HARADA... 7TH TURN...!
3-SHAN-TEN.....!
NO, MORE THAN THAT IF HE WAS TO LIMIT HIS HAND TO MANGAN.
AT THAT POINT, TEN WAS IN RYAN-SHAN-TEN.
II-SHAN-TEN.
WAS IN SIGHT...!
HARADA'S VICTORY
A HUGE DIFF-ERENCE...!
ON THE OTHER HAND...
IN THAT INSTANT, HARADA'S VICTORY WOULD BE SET...!
ONE MORE TILE TO GO UNTIL TENPAI.....!

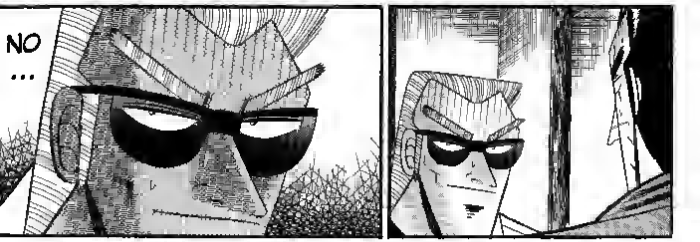
BUT
...
DESPITE EVEN THAT
...

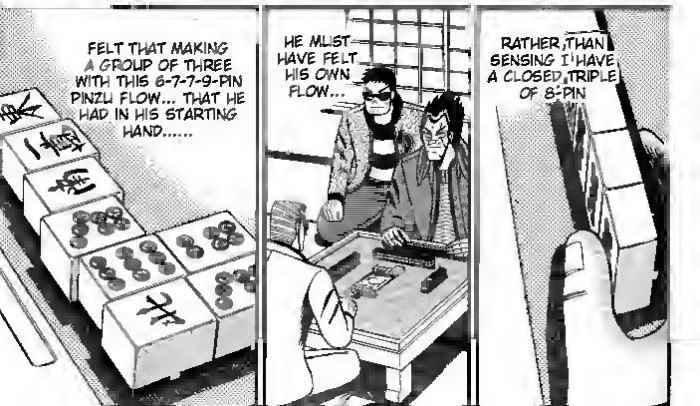
WE STILL DON'T KNOW ...!
IT'S NOT OVER YET ...!

TEN'S DISCARDS

CAN HE TELL .....?
HE DISCARDED 9-7-7-8-PIN FROM HIS HAND.
THAT BASTARD .....!!


THERE'S A CLOSED TRIPLE OF 8-PIN
THAT IN MY HAND
...


NO ...


FELT THAT MAKING A GROUP OF THREE WITH THIS 6-7-7-9-PIN PINZU FLOW... THAT HE HAD IN HIS STARTING HAND.....
HE MUST HAVE FELT HIS OWN FLOW...
RATHER THAN SENSING I HAVE A CLOSED TRIPLE OF 8-PIN

IN FACT
.....
WON'T
HAPPEN
NOW...!
THIS
IS BAD
.....!

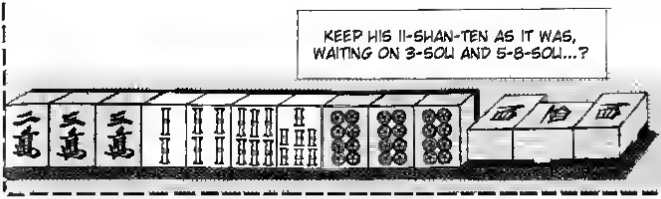
THAT FORESIGHT...!
MAYBE HE'S ON TO SOMETHING.....!

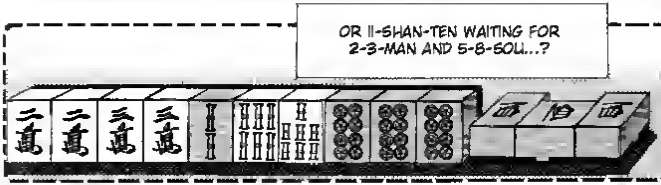
AREN'T WRONG...!
TEN'S HUNCHES, RIGHT NOW...

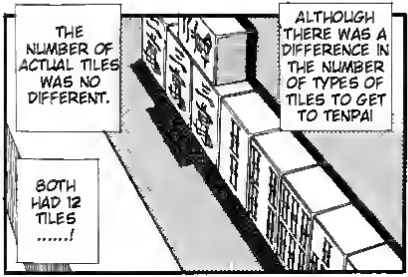
HARADA: 9TH TURN
AFTER GETTING THIS FAR...!
I CAN'T LOSE NOW...!
IT'S NOT OVER YET.
NO MATTER WHAT.....!
I'LL FINISH IT!!
I WON'T RUN FROM THIS FINAL SHOWDOWN.....!
INTUITION LIKE THAT IS TERRIFYING.....
IN MAHJONG
IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL "WIN"...!
IN THE END, AN "ADVANTAGE" IS JUST AN "ADVANTAGE"...
HMM...
I STILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE, BUT...
RIGHT NOW...

I WILL "WIN" WITH THIS HAND.....!
ゴ...

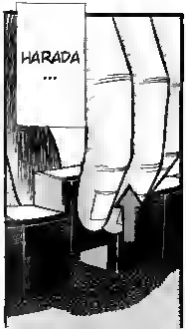
NOW ...
ON THE 10TH TURN, HARADA DREW 2-MAN...
THAT IS TO SAY...
HARADA HAD A CHOICE TO MAKE.....!

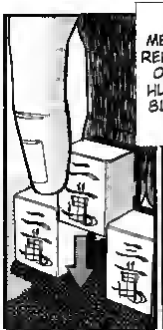

KEEP HIS II-SHAN-TEN AS IT WAS, WAITING ON 3-SOU AND 5-8-SOU...?


OR II-SHAN-TEN WAITING FOR 2-3-MAN AND 5-8-SOU...?

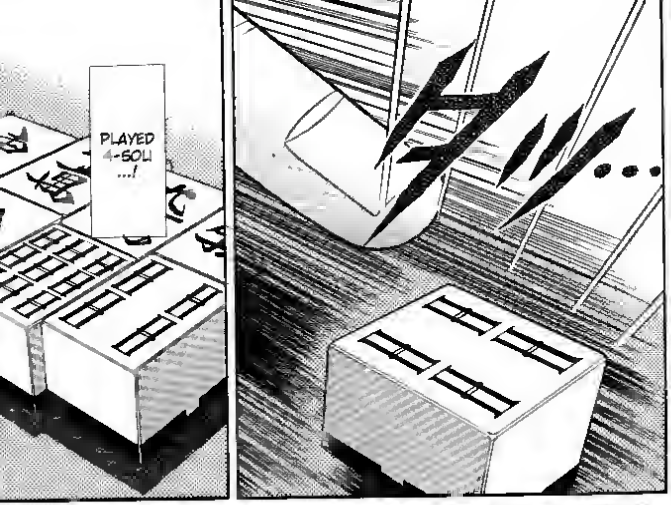

THE NUMBER OF ACTUAL TILES WAS NO DIFFERENT.
ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE IN THE NUMBER OF TYPES OF TILES TO GET TO TENPAI
BOTH HAD 12 TILES .....!

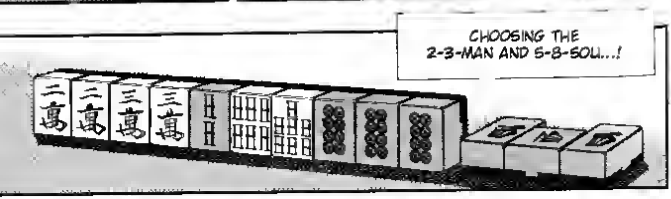
OF THOSE TWO
.....


HARADA ...

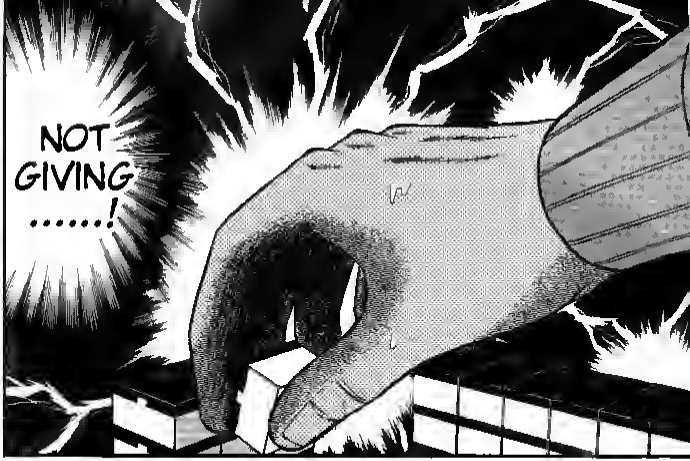

MEANT RELYING ON A HUNCH BUT...

TO CHOOSE ONE

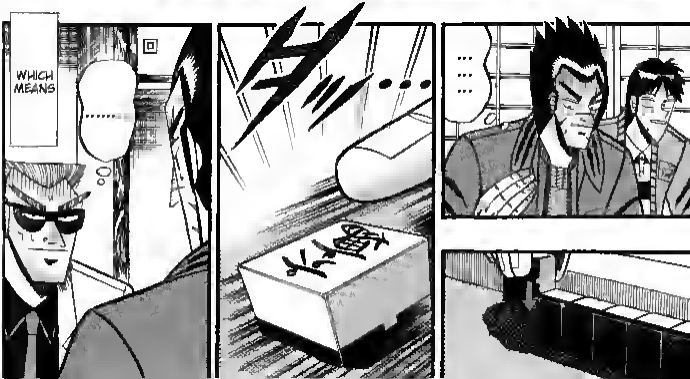

PLAYED 4-SOU ...!


CHOOSING THE 2-3-MAN AND 5-8-SOU...!

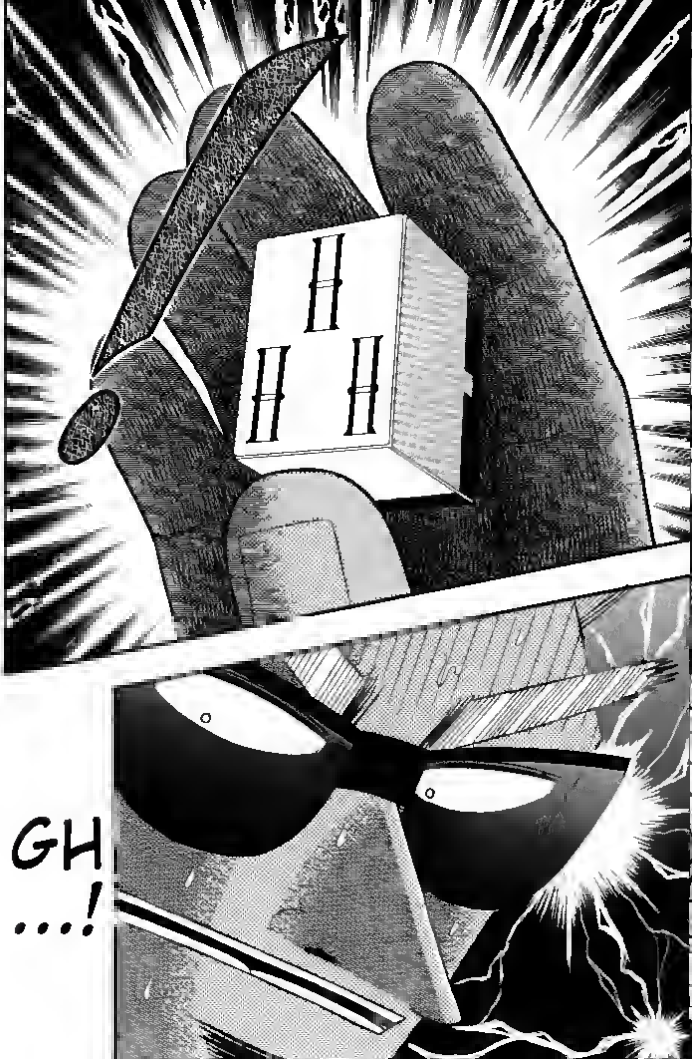
HE'D THINK OF THE ENEMY'S SITUATION.
IN SHORT ...
IF THERE WAS THE SAME CHANCE OF GETTING EITHER ONE
.....


NOT GIVING .....!

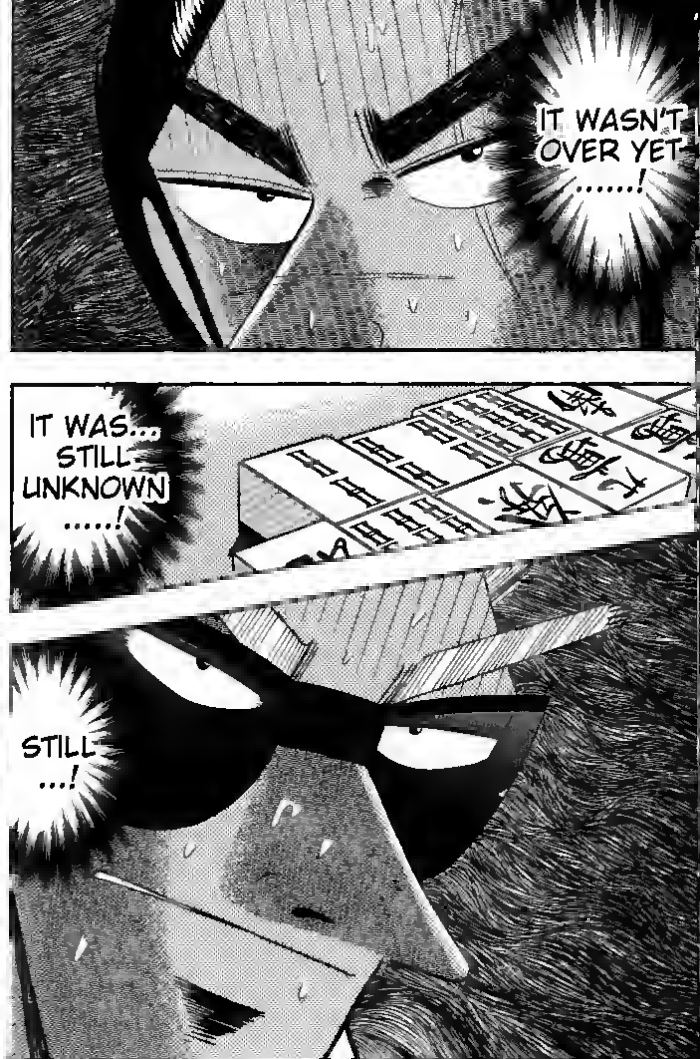
TEN A CHANCE .....!


WHICH MEANS
.....
...
...
...

NOT LETTING HIM MAKE A CALL...!
THAT IS WHAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO DISCARD.
OR NEAR THE DORA ...
THE DORA ...
ANYONE WOULD MAKE IT .....
DISCARD THE CLOSED WAIT, 2-4-6OU ...!
THIS DECISION WAS INEVITABLE ...!
BUT ...


GH
...!

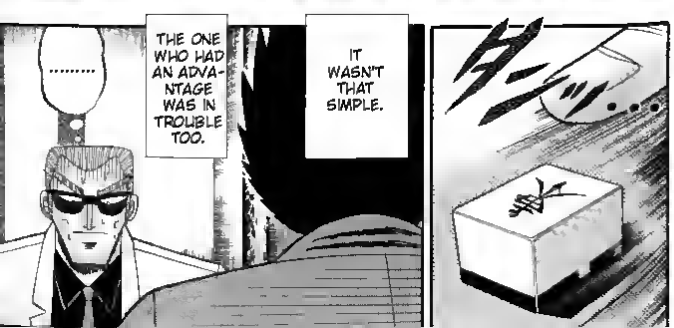
BACKFIRED...!!
KH...!
BY DRAWING 3-SOU ...!
IF HE HADN'T CHANGED HIS HAND, HE'D BE IN TENPAI ...
...
...
...
IN THIS GRAND FINALE
IT WAS GOING ASTRAY ...!
CHAOS.
KH...
THE TANGLED THREADS OF THIS MATCH .....!


IT WASN'T OVER YET.....!
IT WAS... STILL UNKNOWN.....!
STILL...!

STILL
...!

天
CHAPTER 127
THIRST
ざわ…
ざわ…

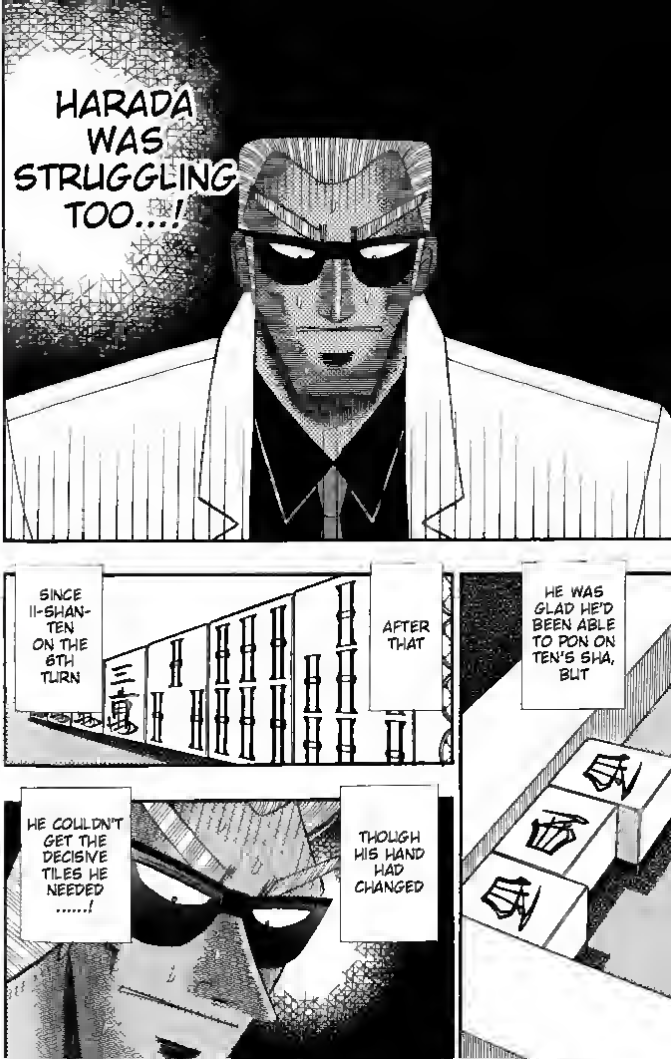
IT WAS AN OVERWHELMING DISADVANTAGE, BUT...
THE DISADVANTAGE THAT TEN WAS AT HADN'T CHANGED.
OF COURSE


.....
THE ONE WHO HAD AN ADVANTAGE WAS IN TROUBLE TOO.
IT WASN'T THAT SIMPLE.
ダーン…

CHAOS IN THIS, THE 17TH BATTLE, THE FINAL ROUND.

THE GAME GOING ASTRAY ...!

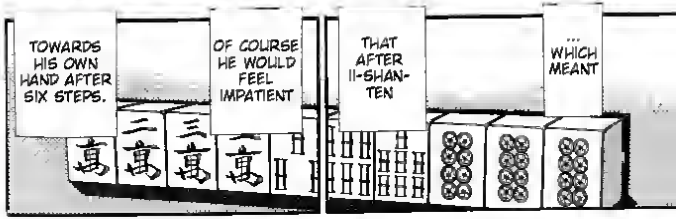
EAST-WEST BATTLE TWO-PLAYER MAHJONG.
ざわ…

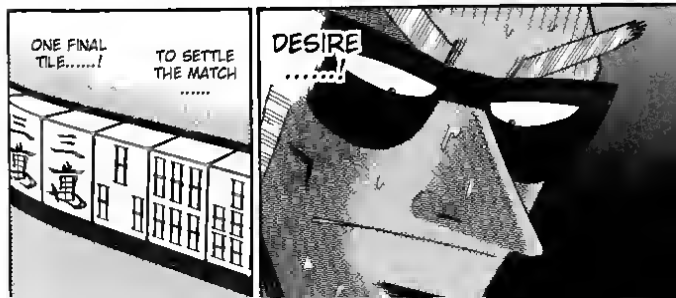

HARADA WAS STRUGGLING TOO...!
SINCE II-SHAN-TEN ON THE 6TH TURN
AFTER THAT
HE WAS GLAD HE'D BEEN ABLE TO PON ON TEN'S SHA, BUT
HE COULDN'T GET THE DECISIVE TILES HE NEEDED .....!
THOUGH HIS HAND HAD CHANGED

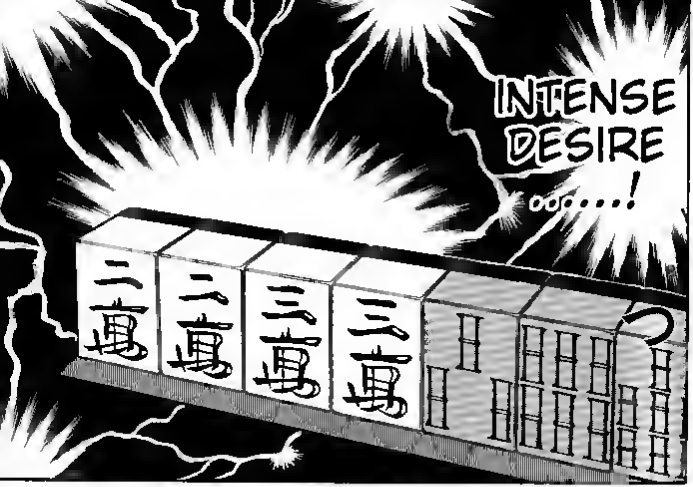
THE WORST TIMING.
THAT CLOSED WAIT HE HAD GOTTEN RID OF TURNED OUT TO BE
AT THE POINT HE CHANG-ED
LAST TURN
FROM A CLOSED WAIT TO A DOUBLE PAIR
IT BEGAN TO GO WILD...
THOUGH THE CHANGE HE MADE WAS INEVITABLE
HIS POINT OF VIEW HAD CHANGED TO RESPOND TO TEN.

HARADA'S INTUITION ...!
HE HAD AN OVERWHELMING LEAD AGAINST TEN.
BUT
WITH ONE MORE PUSH.
WAS SURE THAT HE WOULD WIN
HARADA
THIRST WAS KILLING HARADA'S INTUITION.
TO LOSE THE FLOW ...!
HE BEGAN
HE COULDN'T LOSE ...!
NOW, THE "VICTORY" HE HAD BUILT UP IN HIS MIND
IT WAS THAT HE COULDN'T LOSE.
TO PUT IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND
THE REASON WAS HIS THIRST.
PERHAPS
... ...
H!!

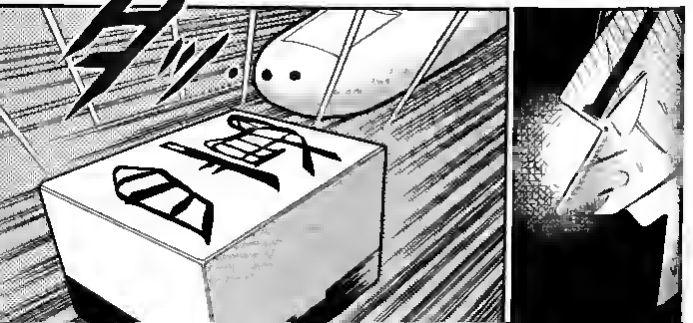
THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD LOSE...!


TOWARDS HIS OWN HAND AFTER SIX STEPS.
OF COURSE HE WOULD FEEL IMPATIENT
THAT AFTER II-SHAN-TEN
... WHICH MEANT

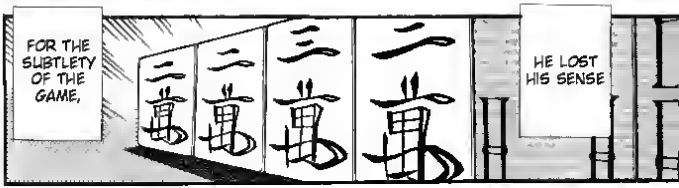

ONE FINAL TILE.....!
TO SETTLE THE MATCH .....
DESIRE .....!


INTENSE DESIRE .....!
二萬
二萬
三萬
三萬

DESTROYED HIS INTUITION .....!
HARADA'S THIRST
.....
THAT DESIRE .....

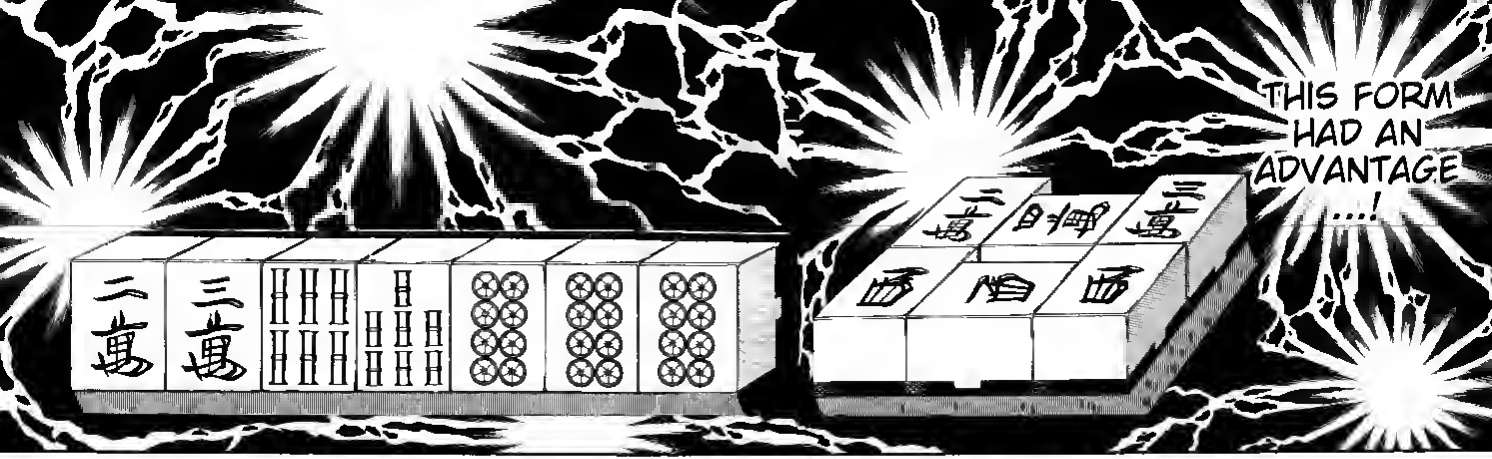

ゲッ
四萬

URGH ...!

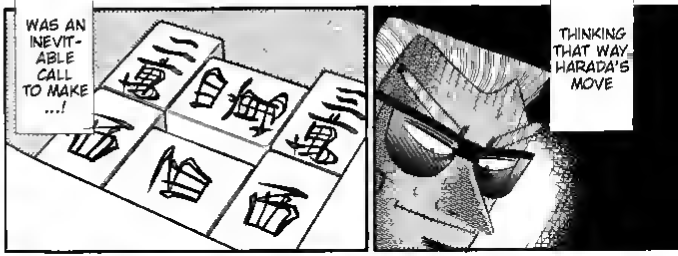

FOR THE SUBTLETY OF THE GAME,
HE LOST HIS SENSE

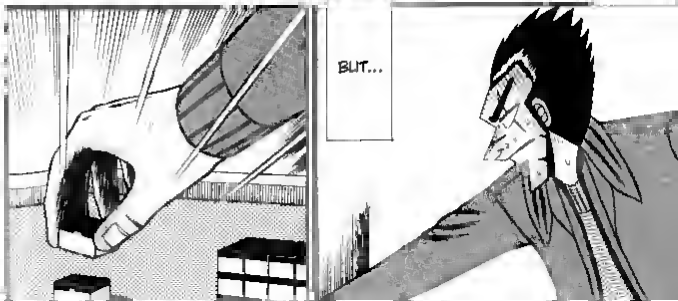
ALL THAT HARADA HAD LEFT WAS
CHII ...!
THE FLOW ...!

JUST EFFICIENCY .....!
THIS 4-MAN
...
...
...
AS IT WAS NOW ...
IF HE DIDN'T CHII, HE'D KEEP THE 5-8-SOU 2-3-MAN
ANY WAY HE LOOKED AT IT
AND ALSO 2-3-MAN AND 6-7-SOU WOULD PUT HIM IN TENPAI.
IT WAS 5-8-SOU AND 1-4-MAN
IF HE DID CHII
BUT


THIS FORM HAD AN ADVANTAGE ...!

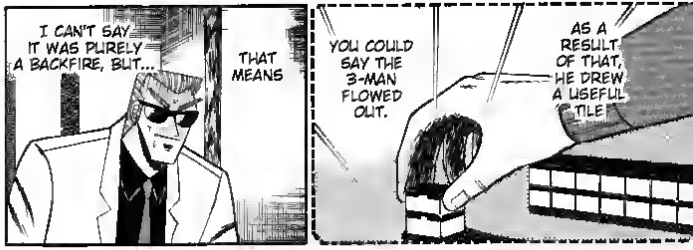
...
...
...

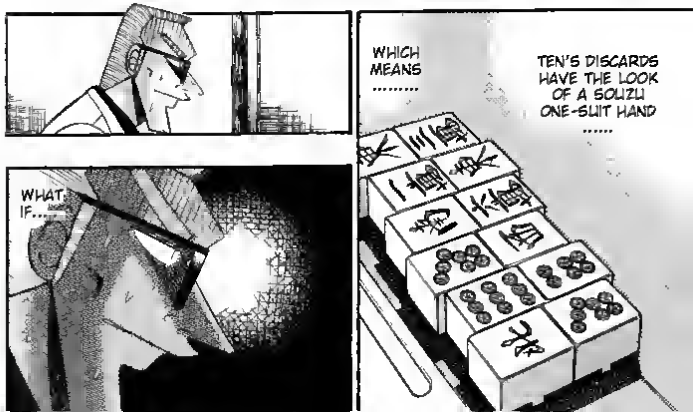

WAS AN INEVIT-ABLE CALL TO MAKE ...!
THINKING THAT WAY- HARADA'S MOVE


BUT...

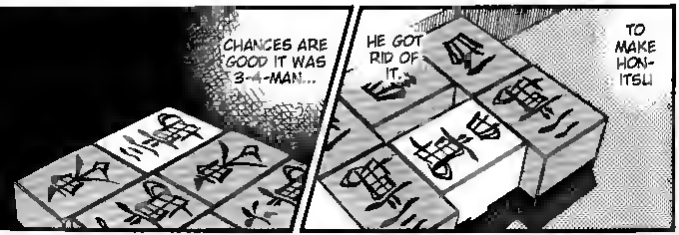
GH ...!
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN TENPAI WITH THIS 3-MAN .....!
IF HE HADN'T CALLED ...
IT BACKFIRED AGAIN ...!
KH.....!

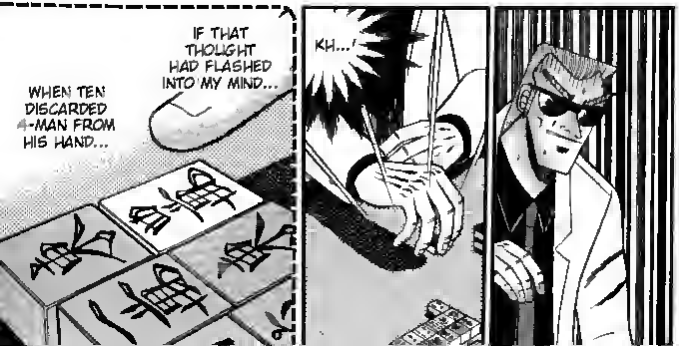
AFTER I MADE THAT CALL, THE DRAW ORDER CHANGED.
IN SHORT
HE CUT IT FROM HIS HAND.
NO... TEN DIDN'T JUST DRAW AND DISCARD THE 3-MAN.


I CAN'T SAY IT WAS PURELY A BACKFIRE, BUT...
THAT MEANS
YOU COULD SAY THE 3-MAN FLOWED OUT.
AS A RESULT OF THAT, HE DREW A USEFUL TILE

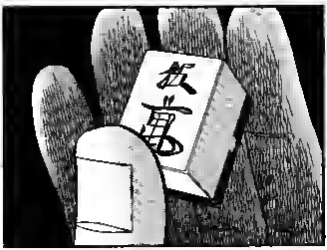

WHICH MEANS .....
TEN'S DISCARDS HAVE THE LOOK OF A SOUZU ONE-SUIT HAND .....
WHAT IF...

COULD BE WHY THAT 3-MAN FLOWED OUT.....!!
TO GET TO TENPAI..... IN ANOTHER ONE OR TWO TURNS


CHANCES ARE GOOD IT WAS 3-4-MAN...
HE GOT RID OF IT.
TO MAKE HON-ITSU


WHEN TEN DISCARDED 4-MAN FROM HIS HAND...
IF THAT THOUGHT HAD FLASHED INTO MY MIND...
KH...!

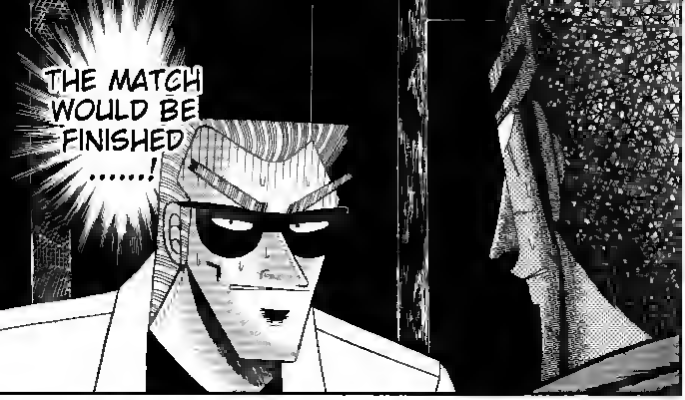
I MIGHT NOT HAVE MADE THIS CALL...!



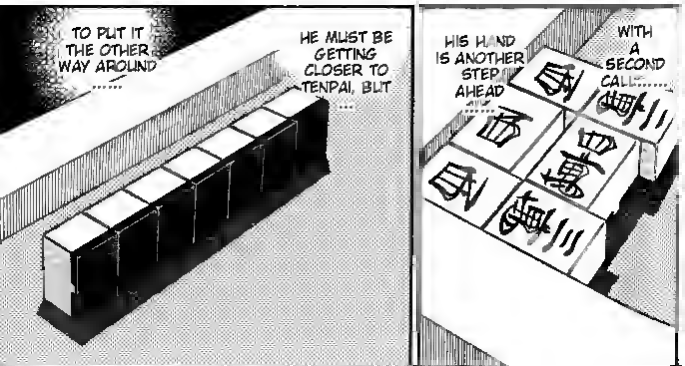
IF I HAD, I'D BE IN TENPAI ....!

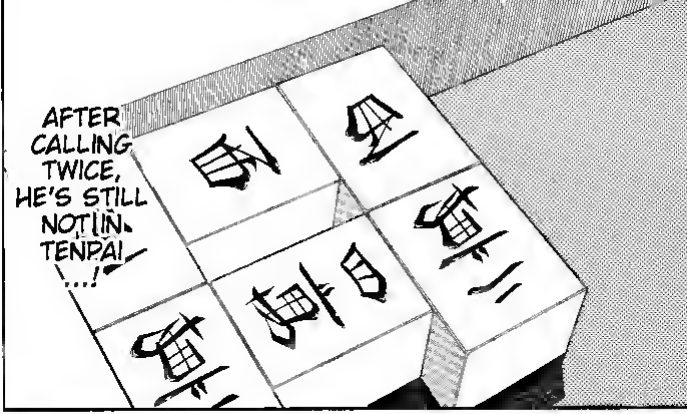
SHIT ...!

H...


THE MATCH WOULD BE FINISHED .....!

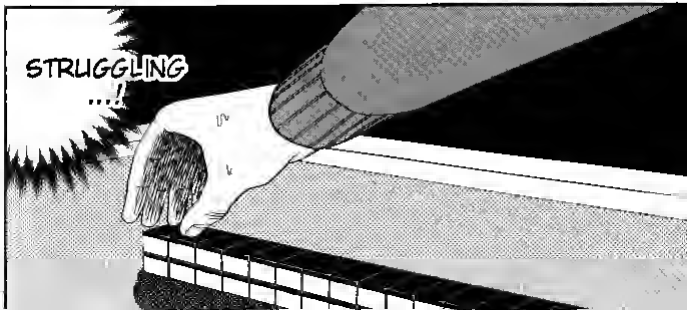
..... HARADA'S HAVING TROUBLE TOO!


TO PUT IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND .....
HE MUST BE GETTING CLOSER TO TENPAI, BUT ...
HIS HAND IS ANOTHER STEP AHEAD .....
WITH A SECOND CALL.....


AFTER CALLING TWICE, HE'S STILL NOT IN TENPAI ....!

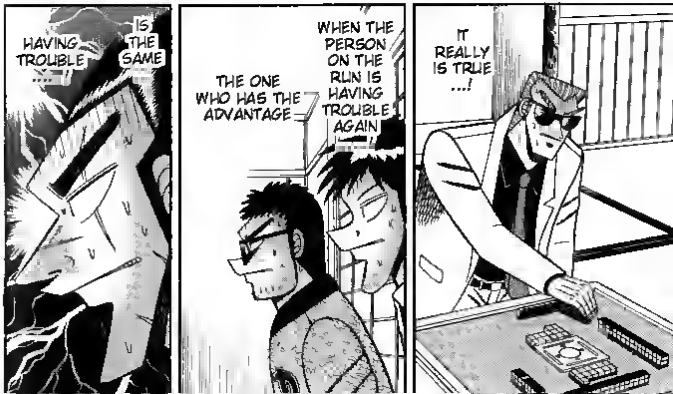
BACK-FIRED ON HIM .....!
IT CLEARLY

SEEING THAT, 2-3-4-5 GROUP HE DISCARDED
HE'S LOSING IT .....!


STRUGGLING ...!

LIKE ME .....!
SUFFERING .....!
TIME ...

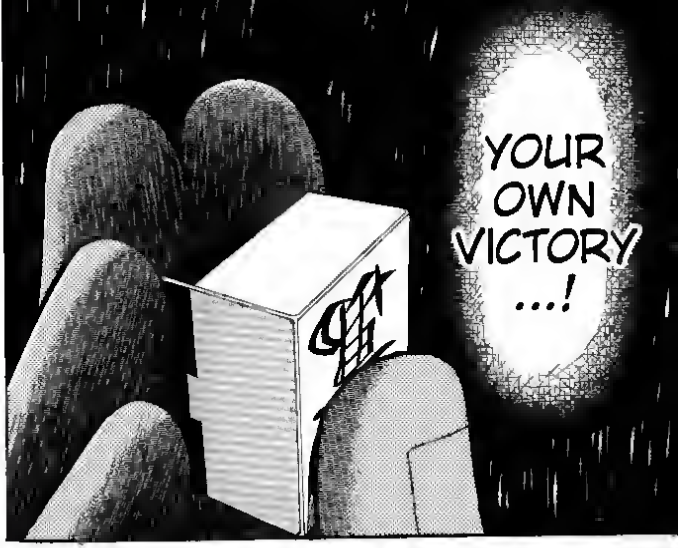
IT'S BEEN SAID, BUT .....
TIME AND TIME AGAIN .....


HAVING TROUBLE ....
IS THE SAME
THE ONE WHO HAS THE ADVANTAGE
WHEN THE PERSON ON THE RUN IS HAVING TROUBLE AGAIN
IT REALLY IS TRUE ...!

.....
ドン!!...
SO...
DON'T GIVE UP ...!

THE POSSIBILITY.....!
FOLLOW IT...!

DON'T GIVE UP ON IT.....!
"VICTORY" .....!
TO WIN ...
TO THE VERY END .....
AIM FOR IT.....!


YOUR
OWN
VICTORY
...!

CHAPTER 128
A HUNCH
ACHIEVE IT.....
YOUR-SELF.....!

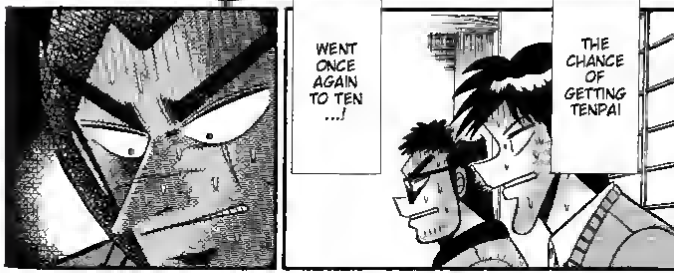
IT DIDN'T COME ...!
BUT .....

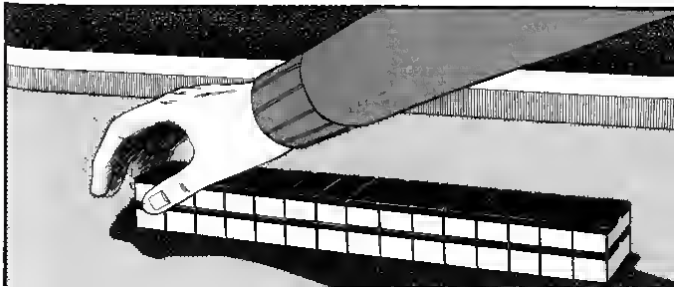
.....
YES...
.....
.....
TEN HAD GOTTEN THERE, TOO ...!
IN FACT AT THIS POINT

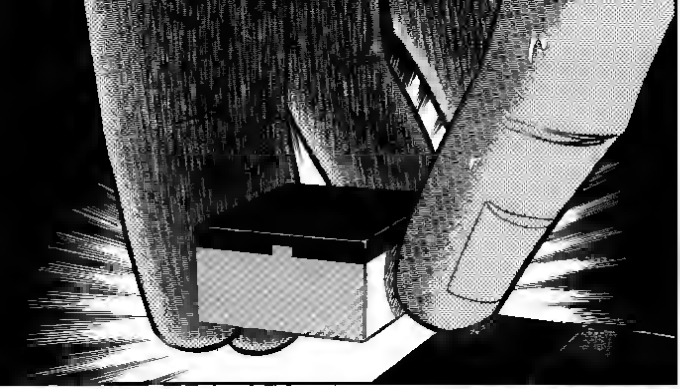
AT II-SHAN-TEN...!
FROM THAT STARTING HAND
THE HAND ADVANCED LITTLE BY LITTLE
AND
REACHED THIS FINAL STAGE.
ONE MORE STEP TO A COMEBACK ...
A HAND THAT WAS A POSSIBLE MANGAN...!
MOST OF ALL .....
THE STATUS OF HARADA'S II-SHAN-TEN WAS NOT SO GOOD.

1-4-MAN AND 5-8-SOU.
ONES HE COULD CALL ON WERE
SET OF WAITS BY A QUITE A FEW.
HARADA HAD A MUCH FULLER
IF HE COULD GET ANY OF THEM, IT WOULD BE TENPAI...
8 TYPES IN TOTAL.
AT THAT INSTANT ...
HE CAN ADD IN 2-3-MAN AND 6-7-SOU.
IF HE DREW IT HIM-SELF
UNCON-DITION-ALLY...!
THE MATCH WOULD BE OVER .....!

NO GOOD ...!
BUT ...

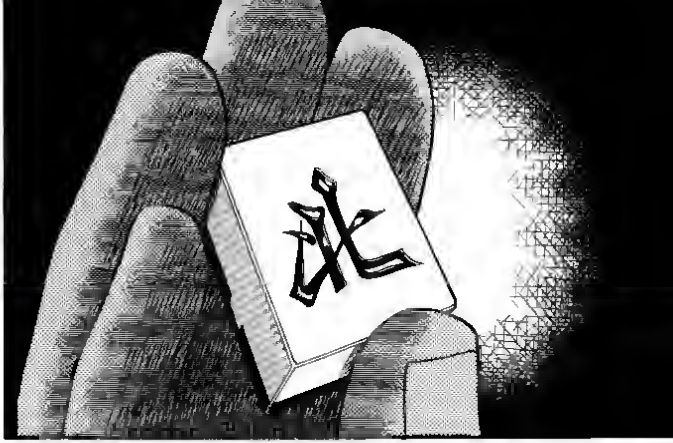

WENT ONCE AGAIN TO TEN ...!
THE CHANCE OF GETTING TENPAI



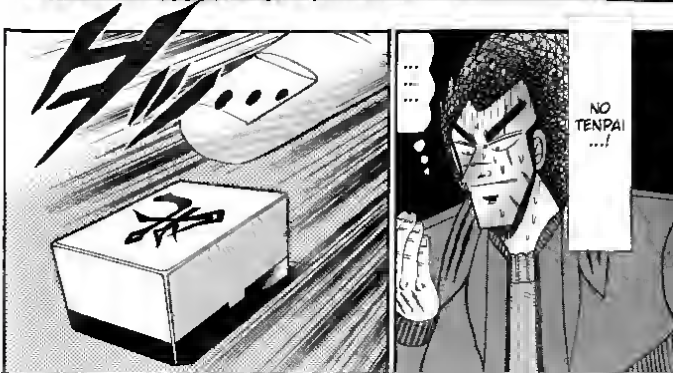


COME ON...!

IF HE DOESN'T GET INTO TENPAI NOW
HE WON'T HAVE MANY CHANCES LEFT.....
IT'S ALREADY CLOSE.....



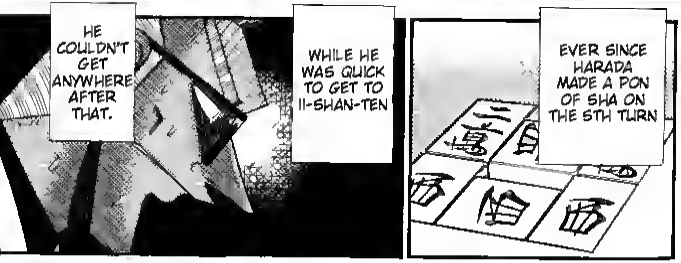
BUT... NO GOOD ...!
KH ...!
... ...

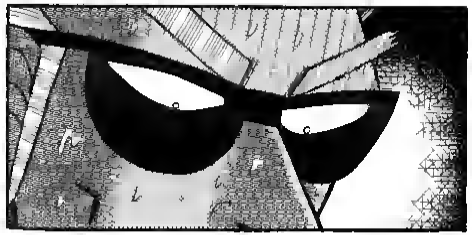

...
...
...
NO TENPAI ...!

COULDN'T GET THAT FINAL STEP...!
BOTH TEN AND HARADA
IT DIDN'T COME ...!
.....
THEY CONTI-NUED ...
THE BALANCE THAT WOULD DECIDE THE MATCH
THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM
STEP BY STEP .....
THEIR VAIN EFFORTS, DRAWING AND DISCARDING.
IT WAS NOT OVER YET.
YES.
WAS SWAYING BACK AND FORTH ...!
WEIGHING THE ABILITY OF THE TWO PLAYERS

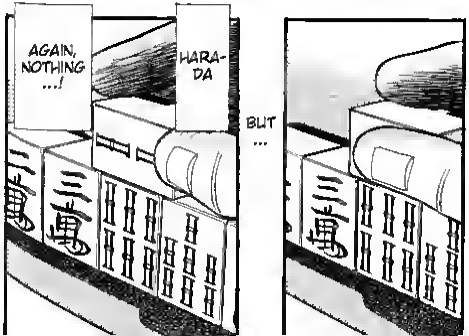
THE GRAND RULER WAS .....

OR.....
HARADA
...
WOULD
IT BE
HARADA
...?


HE COULDN'T GET ANYWHERE AFTER THAT.
WHILE HE WAS QUICK TO GET TO II-SHAN-TEN
EVER SINCE HARADA MADE A PON OF SHA ON THE 5TH TURN

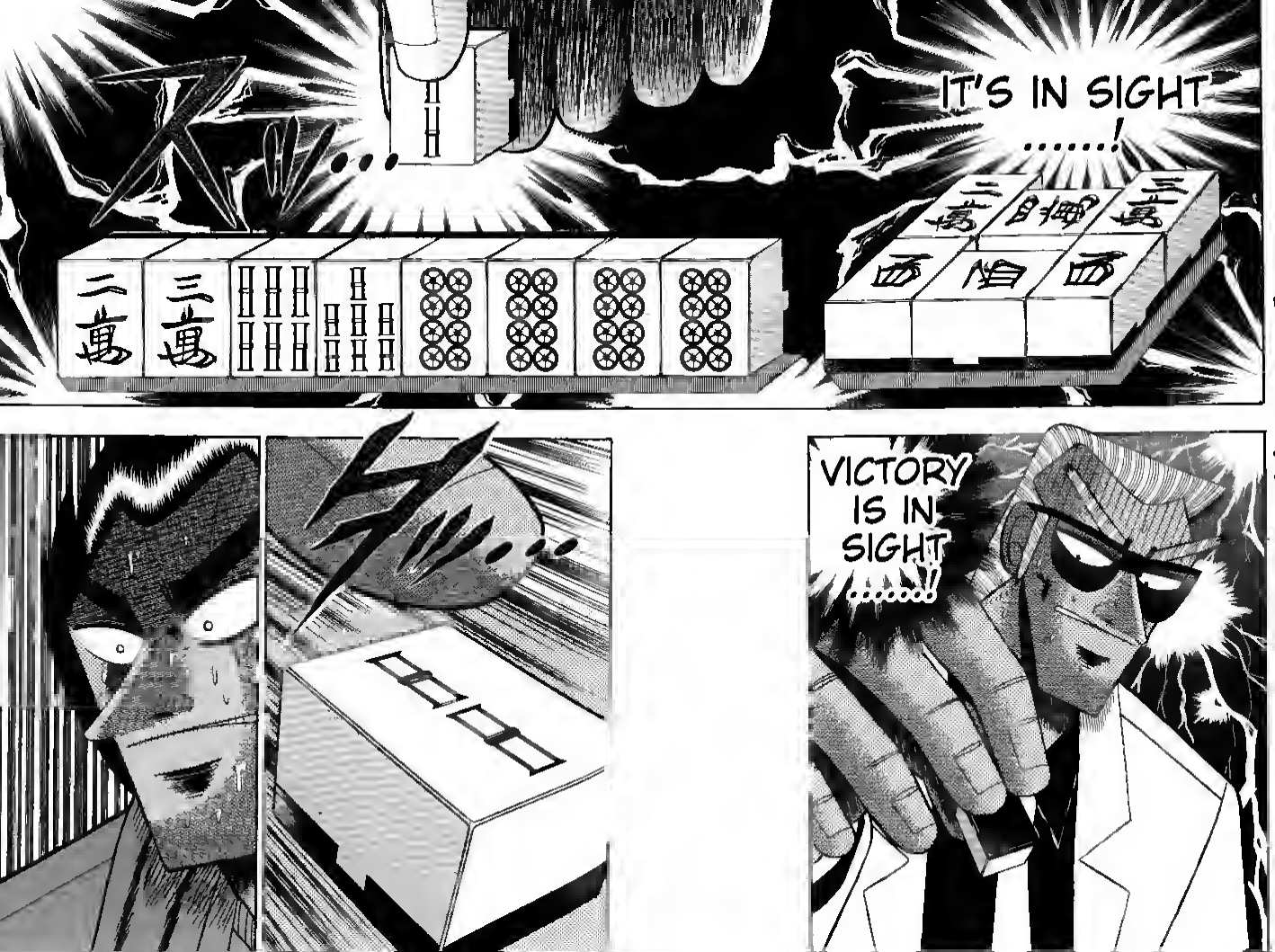


WHICH ONE WAS RIGHT FOR THE THRONE ...?

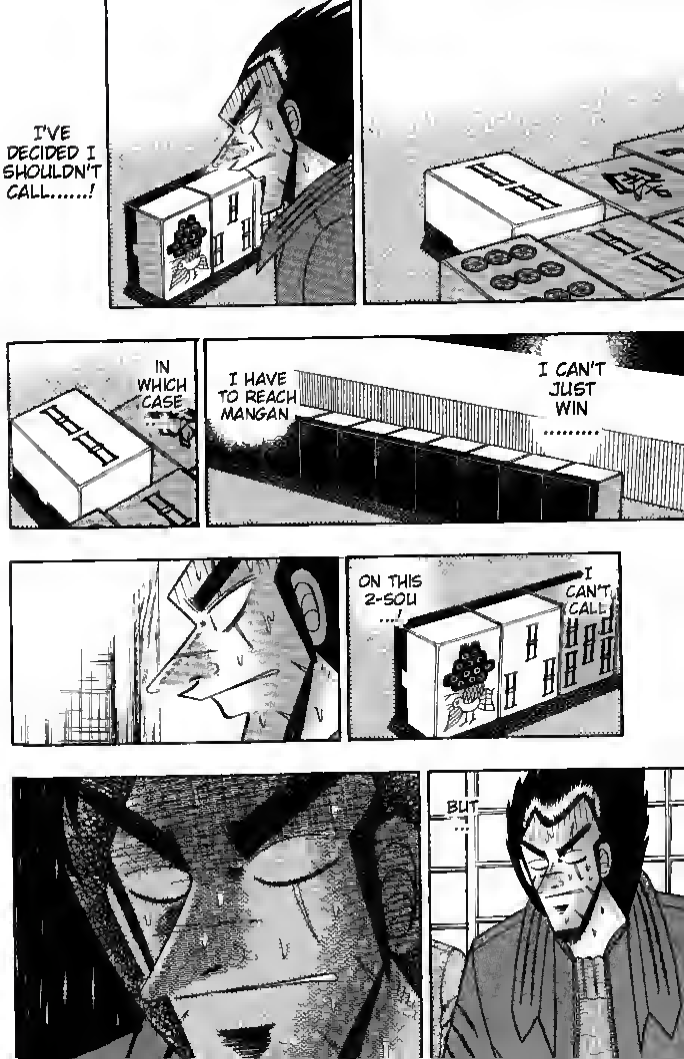


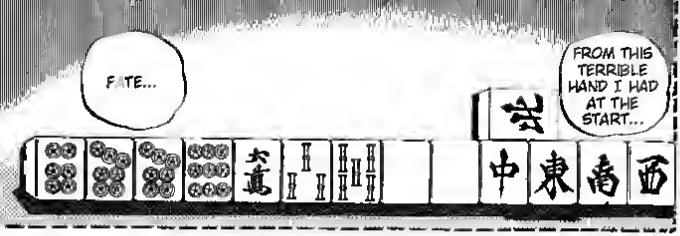
IN THESE FINAL MOMENTS, HE LACKED DIRECTION.
GOING ASTRAY ...
THAT "SOMETHING" WAS COMPLETELY LOST.
THAT MEANT
THAT HARADA MIGHT HAVE "ABANDONED" THIS ROUND.
HIS WAITS WERE GOOD BUT
IT WASN'T A FLOW THAT WOULD GIVE HIM TENPAI.
SO THEN ...
SO THAT HE WOULDN'T GIVE TEN AN EVEN 1% CHANCE
HE COULD HAVE DECIDED TO DISCARD 3-MAN
THAT TEN HAD DISCARDED, TOO.

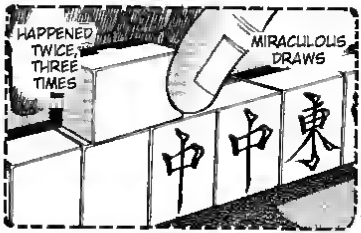
BUT
.....
DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF THAT .....!
HARADA, WHO HAD LOST HIS SENSE OF THE GAME
REJECT-ING IT
IN FAVOR OF HIS II-SHAN-TEN...!
ONE ....
ONE MORE ...
MANZU 1-2-3-4 OR SOUZU 5-6-7-8 ...
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DRAW ANY ONE OF THEM...


IT'S IN SIGHT .....!
WHICH-EVER ONE I DRAW, I'LL BE IN TENPAI ...!
VICTORY IS IN SIGHT .....!

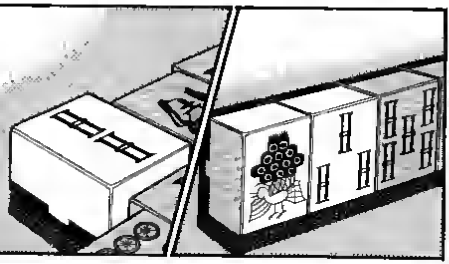
THAT WAS WHY HE LET GO OF 2-SOU...!
THE FATED 2-SOU ...!
TEN ...
... ...


I'VE DECIDED I SHOULDN'T CALL.....!
IN WHICH CASE ...
I HAVE TO REACH MANGAN
I CAN'T JUST WIN .....
ON THIS 2-SOU ...!
I CAN'T CALL!
BUT ...


FATE...
FROM THIS TERRIBLE HAND I HAD AT THE START...
中
東
南
西


HAPPENED TWICE, THREE TIMES
MIRACULOUS DRAWS
中
中
東

I'VE GOTTEN THERE.
FROM THE WOVEN THREADS OF FATE



WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW UNLIKELY IT IS...

THIS MIGHT BE FATE.....!

.....
.....
Ooo
IT'S A HUNCH ...!
KH ...!
GO ...!
A CHANCE ...
ONE AND ONLY THING FATE HAS GIVEN ME .....
IT'S THE ONE AND ONLY...
IT'S SLIM, BUT
A FEELING LIKE THAT
A CRACK TO USE TO CRAWL UPWARD ...!
HANGING ON BY THE SKIN OF MY FINGERS
TO MAKE A COMEBACK ...

CHII ...!
TEN ...
HE MADE A MOVE ...!
A FINAL .....
OUTRAGEOUS GAMBLE...!

.....
Uu
HARADA ...
.....
THIS IS AS FAR AS IT GOES.
I'M DECLARING .....!

第128話「直感」●完

■天TEN 14 ／完

●近代麻雀コミックス●

福本伸行

FUKUMOTO NOBUYUKI

Kindai Mahjong Comics

14

天

TEN

天和通りの快男児

TENHOU-DOORI NO KAIDANJI

THE NICE GUY ON THE PATH OF TENHOU

竹書房

TAKE SHOBO